SESSION 1890.

DEBATES, QUESTIONS &c.
ON
INDIAN AFFAIRS.

00108535

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HANSARD'S
INDIAN DEBATES.

SESSION 1890.

(53 & 54 VICTORIA.)

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COMPRISING EXTRACTS FROM

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OF ALL QUESTIONS, PROCEEDINGS, AND DEBATES
RELATING TO INDIAN AFFAIRS.

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THE HANSARD PUBLISHING UNION, LIMITED,
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PRINTERS, PUBLISHERS, AND PROPRIETORS OF
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UNDER CONTRACT WITH H.M. GOVERNMENT.

THE MINISTRY

Of the Most Noble the Marquess of SALISBURY, K.G.,
At the Opening of the Session on the 11th February, 1890.

THE CABINET.

Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs	Most Hon. Marquess of Salisbury, K.G.
First Lord of the Treasury	Right Hon. William Henry Smith.
Lord Chancellor of England	Right Hon. Lord Halsbury.
Lord Chancellor of Ireland	Right Hon. Lord Ashbourne.
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Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. George Joachim Goschen.
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Secretary of State for the Colonies	Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, G.C.M.G.
Secretary of State for War	Right Hon. Edward Stanhope.
Secretary of State for India	Right Hon. Viscount Cross, G.C.B.
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First Lord of the Admiralty	Right Hon. Lord George Francis Hamilton.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Right Hon. Duke of Rutland, G.C.B.
President of the Board of Agriculture	Right Hon. Henry Chaplin.
President of the Board of Trade	Right Hon. Sir M. E. Hicks Beach, Bart.
President of the Local Government Board	Right Hon. Charles Thomson Ritchie.

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Secretary to the Local Government Board	Walter H. Long, Esq.
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Under Secretary, Foreign Department	Right Hon. Sir James Fergusson, Bart., G.C.S.I.
Under Secretary for Colonies	Right Hon. Baron Henry de Worms.
Under Secretary for War	Right Hon. Earl Brownlow.
Under Secretary for India	Right Hon. Sir John Eldon Gorst, Q.C.
Paymaster General	Earl of Jersey.
Postmaster General	Right Hon. Henry Cecil Raikes.
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Judge Advocate General	Right Hon. Sir William Thackeray Marriott, Kt.
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Solicitor General	Sir Edward George Clarke, Q.C.

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Lord Advocate	Right Hon. James Patrick Bannerman Robertson
Solicitor General	Moir T. Stormonth Darling, Esq.

IRELAND.

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Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. Lord Ashbourne.
Attorney General	Right Hon. Dodgson Hamilton Madden.
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Lord Chamberlain	Right Hon. Earl of Lathom.
Master of the Horse	His Grace the Duke of Portland.
Treasurer of the Household	Right Hon. Earl of Radnor.
Comptroller of the Household	Right Hon. Lord Arthur Hill.
Vice Chamberlain of the Household	Right Hon. Viscount Lewisham.
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Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard	Right Hon. Earl of Limerick.
Master of the Buckhounds	Right Hon. Earl of Coventry.
Chief Equerry and Clerk Marshal	Colonel Sir G. A. Maude, K.C.B.
Mistress of the Robes	Her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch.

HANSARD'S INDIAN DEBATES.

Session 1890.

[An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech denotes revision by the speaker.]

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, February 11, 1890.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR delivered HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH to both Houses of Parliament as follows:—

"*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

"My relations with other Powers continue to be of a friendly character.

"An armed force under a Portuguese officer was dispatched during the autumn from the Colony of Mozambique into territory where British settlements had been formed, and where there are native tribes who have been taken under my protection. A collision, attended with bloodshed, took place, and acts were committed inconsistent with the respect due to the flag of this country. The Portuguese Government have now, at my request, promised to withdraw their military forces from the territory in question.

"A Conference of the Powers interested in the suppression of the Slave Trade has been convoked at Brussels by the King of the Belgians. I earnestly hope that the results of its deliberations will advance the great cause for which it is assembled.

"A Commercial Convention has been concluded with the Khedive of Egypt, and a Provisional Arrangement for the adjustment of pressing fiscal questions has been made with the Government of Bulgaria.'

"Papers on all these questions will be presented to you.

"The Convention concluded by me with the Emperor of Germany and the Republic of the United States with respect to the Government of Samoa will be laid before you, together with the Protocols of the Conference; as also a Treaty which has been concluded with the United States for amending the Law of Extradition between the two countries. The latter instrument still awaits the ratification of the Senate.

"The disordered condition of Swaziland having rendered it necessary to make provision for the better government of that territory, the independence of which was recognised by the Convention of London, I have, acting in conjunction with the President of the South African Republic, sent a Commissioner to learn the views of the Swazis and of the white settlers.

"I shall await with lively interest the result of the Conference now being held to discuss the important question of the federation of the Australian Colonies. Any well-considered measure which, by bringing these great Colonies into closer union, will increase their welfare and strength, will receive my favourable consideration.

"*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

"The estimates of the year for defraying the cost of the Government of the country will be laid before you. They have been drawn with a due regard to economy and to the necessities of the public service.

"*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

"The continued improvement in the state of Ireland, and the further diminution in the amount of agrarian crime, have made it possible very largely to restrict the area in which it is necessary to deal with certain offences by summary process. Proposals for increasing under due financial precaution the number of occupying owners; for extending to Ireland the principles of local self-government which have already been adopted in England and Scotland, so far as they are applicable to that country; and for improving the material well-being of the population in the poorer districts, will be submitted to you.

"A Bill for facilitating and cheapening the transfer of land in England will be again presented to you.

"Provisions will be submitted to you for diminishing the difficulty and cost which at present attend the passage of private legislation required for Scotland.

"A Bill for improving the procedure by which tithe is now levied, and for facilitating its redemption, will be laid before you.

"I have appointed a Commission to report upon the best means of improving the economic conditions which affect the inhabitants of some parts of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

"Your attention will be invited again to a Bill for ascertaining the liability of employers in case of accidents, and to a measure for improving the procedure in winding up insolvent Companies under the Limited Liability Acts.

"There will be laid before you Bills for the consolidation and amendment of the Laws with respect to public health in the Metropolis, and to the dwellings of the working classes; and also a Bill for the better regulation of savings banks and friendly societies.

"Your attention will be directed to the state of the accommodation now provided in camps and barracks, and you will be asked to make better provision for the distribution as well as for the health and comfort of my troops.

"I commend you earnestly in the discharge of your high responsibility to the care and guidance of Almighty God."

Then the Commons withdrew.

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed.

PRAYERS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, February 11, 1890.

THE CHIN-LUSHAI EXPEDITION.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India a question of which I have only been able to give him brief private notice, but which is of special urgency, as affecting the lives of our troops. The question is to ask whether the attention of the Secretary of State has been drawn to the telegrams in the *Times* of yesterday as to the deaths, sickness, and suffering among the troops, English and native, engaged in the Chin-Lushai Expedition; whether the right hon. Gentleman can make any statement to the House on the subject; and whether the Secretary of State will cause full inquiry to be made?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST, Chatham): I only received notice of this question as I was leaving the India Office for the House, and I am afraid I am unable to give the hon. Member a full or satisfactory answer. So far as I am able to speak from a cursory perusal of the Reports that have come from India as to this expedition, mention is made in those Reports of considerable sickness and mortality among the troops engaged, and of certain remedial measures that have been adopted, but I am not in a position at this moment to give any detailed information. As to the statements in the *Times'* telegrams, I will look into the matters referred to, and, if necessary, further inquiry shall be made.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the information he has shows that a large number of deaths were caused by the improper encampment of the troops?

SIR JOHN GORST: I have no information that shows that, but if the hon. Member will repeat his question to-morrow, I will give him more explicit and detailed information.

Wednesday, February 12, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Bradlaugh, Bill to make better provision for the Constitution of the Council of the Governor General of India, and for the Legislative Councils of the several Presidencies and Provinces of India, by enlarging their number, constituting them on a partially elective basis, and increasing their powers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. Caine, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Picton, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. MacNeill.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 56.]

EAST INDIA (LOCAL COUNCILS) BILL

On Motion of Sir William Plowden, Bill to amend and extend the existing Local Councils in India, ordered to be brought in by Sir William Plowden, Mr. Beaufoy, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 81.]

Thursday, February 13, 1890.

COOLIES IN ASSAM.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the Government of India has, by Despatch of 22nd January, 1889, declared that the condition of the coolies in the Assam Tea Gardens is on the whole satisfactory, and that the working of Act 1 of 1882 is beneficial to immigrants; whether he is aware that the death-rate amongt Act labourers has been for the past six years very largely in excess of the death-rate prevailing amongst non-Act labourers, and was so reported by the Chief Commissioner of Assam in 1887; whether he is aware that since 1883 Act labourers have received a lower rate of wages than non-Act labourers; whether the average rate of wages in several districts in 1887 was reported for men at Rs.3 14 9 per month, and for women at Rs.2 14 0; and whether the Secretary of State will recommend the Government of India to make further inquiries as to the condition of Act labourers and free labourers in Assam?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The facts are as stated in the first four paragraphs of the question, and appear in Papers laid before Parliament last Session. The rates of wages, according to the last Report, are—For men, under the Act, Rs.4 6 6 per mensem; for men, not under the Act, Rs.4 11 2; for women, under the Act, Rs.3 10 0; and for women, not under the Act, Rs.3 10 6. The Government of India has been for some time, under the direction of the Secretary of State, making the inquiries suggested.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the death-rate of late years amongst the Act labourers has been largely in excess of the death-rate prevailing amongst non-Act labourers, and if so, whether he considers that such a state of things is satisfactory?

SIR J. GORST: That would involve an argumentative question, which it would be contrary to the ruling of Mr. Speaker to enter into.

THE CRAWFORD CASE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware that Memorials have been received by the Bombay Government from European officers of the Bombay Civil Service with reference to the Crawford case, and the action taken by the Government against the incriminated Mamlutdars, and whether he can state the purport of such Memorials; whether the Secretary of State has also received communications from Lord Reay on the same points, and objecting to the course decided on by the Secretary of State, and whether the Government will lay such Memorials and Communications upon the Table, together with any replies thereto; and, whether the Secretary of State will afford this House an opportunity of discussing the conduct of the Government of India in this matter, in order that reasons may be given why the Secretary of State should exercise his power of disallowing the Act of Indemnity promulgated by the Governor General in Council on October 14th last?

SIR J. GORST: The reply to the first paragraph of the question of the hon. Member is in the negative. In answer to the second paragraph, I have to say that many communications have passed between Lord Reay and the Secretary of State on the subject. Some of these are published in the Papers on the Crawford case which were laid on the Table last Session, and others can be laid on the Table if moved for. In answer to the third paragraph of the question, I may inform the hon. Member that the Secretary of State, having already expressed his approval of the Act of Indemnity, cannot now disallow it.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Has the Secretary of State presented copies of such memorials as have already been forwarded to him?

SIR J. GORST: My answer to the first question of the hon. Member was in the negative. The Secretary of State is not aware of any such communications having been made to the Government of Bombay. I have not seen them, and consequently cannot give any information about them.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government will afford an opportunity for discussing the action of the Government of India in reference to the Mamlutdars incriminated in the Crawford case, before the expiry of the ordinary period limited for the disallowance of the Indian Indemnity Act of the 14th October last?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand): The hon. Gentleman has already been informed by my right hon. Friend, the Under Secretary for India, that the Secretary of State has allowed the Indian Indemnity Act, and therefore, as it is the Law it cannot now be disturbed except by an Act repealing the Indian Indemnity Act. Under these circumstances it will be seen that it would give him no advantage to afford him an opportunity for discussing the action of the Government of India, and I am not in a position to say that an opportunity will be afforded.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, under sections 21 and 23 of the India Council Act, statutes passed by the Governor General in Council or ordinances in cases of emergency have force only if not disallowed in six months, and there is no further provision. Would not that provision meet the case of the Indian Indemnity Act?

SIR J. GORST: I think that a question of that kind had better be put to the Attorney General or some Law Officer of the Crown. If it is desired to repeal the Act it would have to be repealed by a special statute.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I will put a further question on the subject to the right hon. Gentleman himself on Monday.

THE CHIN LUSHAI EXPEDITION.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can now make any statement to the House as to the serious report of the condition of the troops engaged in the Chin-Lushai expedition?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has telegraphed to India for more detailed information on this subject.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [12th February], "That an Humble Address be presented to Her Majesty," &c.

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): . . . Well, Sir, one word, and only one word, on the subject of India. I regret very much that there was no mention in the

Gracious Speech of the Indian question. I saw with great gratification in a forecast given in the newspapers of the Speech that there was to be some legislation in regard to India. I hope that is so. I certainly thought that, having regard to what has taken place, that some mention might have been made, some word of sympathy spoken, to no fewer than 250,000,000 of people, in respect of whom it has been said that one single vote put into the ballot-box here is an act carrying with it more power than is possessed by the whole 250,000,000 of people. Let me present very humbly three facts—I do not wish to trespass on the time and attention of the House—which probably are well-known to the Under Secretary of State (Sir John Gorst), who will, doubtless, during the coming year take them to heart. The right hon. Gentleman knows, first of all, that the famine is a national institution, that there is a famine fund provided by the Government—famine not being an exceptional thing, but a matter about which the Government must take actual steps year by year. I ask him during his year of office to rectify such a shocking state of things. In one year alone—1877—more people died of actual hunger in India and in our dominions than the entire population of this enormous place. There are material ways in which we could assist that people. It has been computed that if you merely supplied the material to furnish one article of clothing for each of our fellow-subjects in India, it would take 100 miles of cloth to be distributed on one day during the entire year. The income of a native Indian is miserably small, and it is for the right hon. Gentleman, with his ability and power, to endeavour to rectify and remedy the condition of the inhabitants of our Indian dominions. I would like to contrast the imports of India with the imports of the Australian Federation. The imports in the Australian Federation are at the rate of from £14 to £15 per head of the population. The imports of India amount only to 1s. 6d. per head of the population. What an enormous development would take place in our industries if we could increase our exports to that portion of our Empire! I will not do more than barely touch upon these points, but the facts ought to be known. The great efforts of Lord Macaulay, 50 years ago, have done good. That agitation is now largely in progress in India. I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will not consider, during his term of office, some means of promoting the interest of the people of India by enabling them in some measure to control their own affairs, and by endeavouring to ameliorate the condition of that vast population. . . .

Debate Adjourned.

Friday, February 14, 1890.

EAST INDIA (CRAWFORD CASE).

Address for—

"Return giving Copies of, or Extracts from, Correspondence with the Governments of India and Bombay as to the Mamlutdars incriminated in the Crawford Case."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, with reference to a Despatch from the Government of India, dated 28th March, 1870, and signed by Lord Mayo, Sir William Mansfield, Sir Henry Durand, Sir John Strachey, Sir Richard Temple, and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, which was understood to contain a passage to the following effect:—

> "We shall be glad to see some plan adopted by which the furlough allowances of civil engineers shall be equalised with those of military officers in the Public Works Department, and so far as practicable their advantages of pension also,"

whether any, and what, steps have been taken to carry out this recommendation; and whether this Despatch, and other Papers relating to the furlough allowances and pensions of civil engineers in the Public Works Department of India, can be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The passage quoted is a correct extract from the Despatch, which is to be found in Parliamentary Paper No. 115 of 1871, with other Papers. The steps taken to carry out the recommendation, so far as has been found practicable, are stated in the correspondence published in Parliamentary Paper No. 439 of 1888.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE: Arising out of that answer, will my right hon. Friend inform the House whether any steps were subsequently taken; and, if so, with what result?

SIR J. GORST: Steps have been taken, but I am afraid I am not able without notice to describe them.

Monday, February 17, 1890.

INDIA—SERVICES—AGE OF CANDIDATES.

MR. MARK-STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the despatch of the Secretary of State for India, raising the limit of the age of candidates, was concurred in by a majority of the members of his Council; and, if not, whether any dissents have been recorded; and whether there is any objection to lay such dissents, if any, upon the Table?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The despatch of the Secretary of State referred to in the question of the hon. Member was not concurred in by a majority of the members of the Council for India. If the hon. Member will move for the information for which he asks it will be laid upon the Table.

THE INDIAN INDEMNITY BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India under what statutory authority the Secretary of State claims to have allowed the Indian Indemnity Bill of the 14th October last so that disallowance is now impossible; whether the sole statutory provisions as to the power of the Crown to disallow laws and regulations made by the Governor General of India, in Council, are those contained in the 24 and 25 Vic. c. 67, ss. 21 and 23; whether the power of the Crown to disallow under Section 21 can be exercised without limit of time, and under Section 23 within six months from the promulgation of the ordinance; and whether the Government will give the House an early opportunity of discussing the Indian Indemnity Bill with a view to its disallowance?

SIR J. GORST: Section 21 of 24 and 25 Vic., c. 67, is the only section which empowers the Crown to disallow an Act which has been passed with the approval of the Governor General of India. No limitation of time is specified, but if an Act is disallowed, the disallowance is required to be signified by Her Majesty through the Secretary of State in Council. In the present case the Crown, having, through the Secretary of State, in the usual manner signified that the Act will be left to its operation, the Secretary of State is advised that the matter is at an end. The hon. Member for Northampton will therefore see that the last part of his question requires no answer.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Am I to understand that the right hon. Gentleman corrects the answer which he gave the other day that the Secretary of State had power to disallow an Act, although it might have been previously allowed?

*SIR J. GORST: If I said so I must have been guilty of some inaccuracy of language. When the Crown has signified its assent the Act must remain in operation.

INDIAN GRIEVANCES.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been drawn to a petition signed by Sir W. Wedderburn, Bart., as President of the Indian National Congress, recently held in Bombay, asking for the restoration of the right of raising matter of grievance, with Mr. Speaker in the Chair, prior to the annual Budget statement; and whether the Government will consent to a Resolution in the terms of that petition or in those of the Motion of the hon. Member for North Kensington?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): My attention has been called to a petition signed by Sir W. Wedderburn, as President of the Indian National Congress recently held in Bombay, and also to the Resolution founded on it standing in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for North Kensington (Sir Roper Lethbridge), but Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to recommend such an alteration in the rules of the House as is suggested in the question, as they are of opinion that it is of greater advantage to the interests of India that the time at which the Indian Budget should be considered should be fixed than that Motions should be raised on the Motion for going into Committee. A Bill will be introduced in the course of the present Session which will give hon. Members an opportunity for the discussion of Indian grievances.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: Is the Bill to which the right hon. Gentleman refers likely to be introduced early in the Session? A very late introduction of a Bill would only further delay and irritate.

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: Yes, Sir; I hope that it will be introduced at an early period, so as to afford the opportunity for discussion which hon. Members desire.

Tuesday, February 18, 1890.

LOCAL COUNCILS.

SIR W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any reports have been sent in by the Local Governments in India in regard to improving and extending the Local Councils within provincial limits; whether in any instances these reports recognise the propriety of admitting the representative element in these Councils; and whether the Secretary of State will lay these reports upon the Table of the House?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA** (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has received copies of communications which have passed between the Government of India and the Home Government with reference to the Local Councils. These communications are of a confidential character, and the Secretary of State cannot at present lay them on the Table.

***MR. BRADLAUGH** (Northampton): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the communications have been approved of, and whether the recommendations which have been made in regard to them are of a confidential character?

SIR W. PLOWDEN: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question may I ask him to answer the second paragraph of my question?

***SIR J. GORST**: It is obvious that to answer paragraph No. 2 would be stating the contents of a confidential document.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: Have any of these reports been forwarded through Lord Dufferin, and are Lord Dufferin's recommendations in regard to them considered confidential by the Government?

***SIR J. GORST**: No, Sir; the reports were not forwarded to Lord Dufferin.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: May I ask if some of the reports were not forwarded through Lord Dufferin?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

BENGAL BOARD OF REVENUE—APPOINTMENT OF MR. BEAMES.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the explanation which, on the 24th May last, it was stated would be asked from the Government of India respecting the appointment of Mr. J. Beames, in spite of a recorded expression of opinion by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal adverse to Mr. Beames' appointment to the Board, has been received; and, if so, whether he will lay it upon the Table of the House?

***SIR J. GORST**: The explanation has arrived and can be laid on the Table of the House, if moved for. The hon. Member will see from it that the statement that the Lieutenant Governor recorded an opinion adverse to Mr. Beames' appointment is the reverse of the fact. The Lieutenant Governor recommended it.

KASHMIR.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government will, at an early date, present to the House the Papers relating to the action of the Government of India towards Kashmir since H.H. Pertab-Singh became Maharaja: and, whether, if the Maharaja of Kashmir, in the words used by the Secretary of State on 27th August last,

> "Sees it advisable to resume control of his State, and to govern it in a way which will be a benefit to his subjects and to neighbouring countries as well,"

the Government of India will facilitate his doing so?

***SIR J. GORST**: The Government is anxious to give free information to the

House of Commons respecting the affairs of Kashmir, and Papers recently received will be laid on the Table. The statement of the Secretary of State quoted by the hon. Member was contingent on the existing state of things in Kashmir being first remedied. The Government are anxious to show every consideration to the rights of the Maharaja consistent with a one regard to the still more sacred rights of the people of Kashmir.

EAST INDIA (AGE OF CANDIDATES FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE.)

Address for—

"Copy of Minutes of Dissent from the Despatch addressed to the Government of India by the Secretary of State in Council, regarding the age of Candidates for the Indian Civil Service."—(*Mr. Mark Stewart.*)

Wednesday, February 19, 1890.

FOREIGN COUNTRIES (GOLD AND SILVER MARKING).

Return ordered—

"Of information from Foreign Countries relative to the assaying and Hall-marking of Gold and Silver wares."—(*Mr. Kimber.*)

Thursday, February 20, 1890.

BURMA—OIL CONCESSIONS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is a fact that a concession has been granted of certain oil-bearing country in Burma, and to what extent; and, if so, whether the Secretary of State will state the circumstances and conditions under which, and to whom, the concession has been made?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): A lease has been granted of certain oil-bearing country in Burma for 12 years. I believe that the concession is accompanied by particular regulations and conditions, and that many applications have been received for similar concessions. The Secretary of State has asked for further information on the subject.

THE CHAUDALIN MAHARANI OF REWA.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Seccretary of State for India whether, as promised on the 15th August last, the attention of the Government has been called to the grievances of H.H. the Chaudalin Maharani of Rewa; and, whether any, and what, answer has been received?

SIR J. GORST: What I stated on the 15th of August last was that the attention of the Government of India had been called to the Maharani of Rewa by the question of the hon. Member. A Memorial upon the subject was addressed by the Maharani to the Government of India on the 21st of January, 1890, but that Memorial has not yet been transmitted by the Government of India to the Secretary of State.

THE CHIN-LUSHAI EXPEDITION.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any replies have yet been received from the Government of India to the telegraphic inquiries as to the health of the troops engaged in the Chin-Lushai Expedition?

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; no reply has yet been received.

MR. BRADLAUGH: On the very first day of the Session the right hon. Gentleman promised to telegraph for information. Are not nine days an unusual period to wait for a reply from Calcutta?

SIR J. GORST: It would not be very difficult to get a reply from Calcutta, but the hon. Member must recollect that the troops engaged in the Chin-Lushai Expedition are a long way from Calcutta, and some time must necessarily elapse in receiving a reply to any communication.

EAST INDIA (BOARD OF REVENUE, BENGAL.)

Address for—

"Copies of, or Extracts from, Correspondence relating to the appointment of Mr. Beames as a Member of the Board of Revenue, Bengal."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, February 21, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

QUESTION.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, in view of the notice of Motion of the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India, I desire to ask him whether he will lay upon the Table of this House any of the communications which have been received from the present or late Viceroy in relation to proposals for altering the constitution of the Councils in India?

***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS)**: My Lords, in reference to the Bill which I hope to introduce to your Lordships to-night, which is practically upon a very unimportant matter, I do not know that there is any communication that can be laid before Parliament, which can assist your Lordships in any way. With regard to any other matters, in regard to the communications which have passed, they seem to me to be of a confidential character and that they ought not to be laid at the present time before Parliament.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.—(No. 28.)

FIRST READING.

***VISCOUNT CROSS**: I rise to call attention to the provisions of the Act regulating the numbers and functions of the several Councils in India, and to present a Bill. My Lords, it is not my intention to detain your Lordships at any length with any statement as to the Bill which I must ask leave to introduce to-night, but I think it is only due to your Lordships to state very briefly the objects of, and the reasons for, the measure which I shall ask your Lordships to give to a first reading. Your Lordships are aware that under the provisions of the Indian Council Act of 1861, when the Council of India and the Governor General meet for the purpose of making laws and regulations, in addition to the ordinary number of members of the Council who are assembled or constituted as the Executive Council, other members are nominated by the Governor General in order to assist him and his Council when they meet for the purpose of making laws and regulations; but their powers are very limited, and no business, as the statute says, can be transacted at any such meeting other than the consideration and enactment of measures introduced into the Council for the purpose of enactment. It follows from this that when the Budget of the year is brought forward, and requires fresh legislation, it is then competent to the members of the Legislative Council to discuss the whole financial position of the Government and their entire proposals. But on the other hand if no financial legislation is required, no discussion can take place, and no member of the Legislative Council can say a word upon the subject. It follows also, secondly, that no member of the Legislative Council can ask questions of the government of India—there is no right of interpellating the Government of India as to any of their acts or as to anything that might be of importance in the government of that country. I had considerable discussion with the present Viceroy before he left for India, upon this subject, and I have had an opportunity of ascertaining his views from statements he has made. On the 29th March, 1889, he made a speech to his Legislative Council in the following words—I am not going to read to your Lordships the whole of the speech, but he explains there so very clearly the mischief which I want to remedy that I trust your Lordships will allow me to read a few short extracts from that speech. What he said was this:—

> "It has I believe been usually held that the terms of the Act by which our proceedings are governed, preclude an examination of the Budget, except when the financial arrangements for the year involves legislation in Council; the result has been that the Legislative Council has or has not been able to discuss the Budget according as it was or was not connected with some change in the laws of the country, and it has thus come to pass, that during the last 25 years the Budget has been discussed in Council for 12 years, while for the remaining years no such discussion has been allowed to take place. This seems to me, I must say, an altogether incongruous and inconvenient arrangement, and I am glad to express publicly my opinion, that the opportunities accorded the Legislative Council for passing under review the financial situation of the country, should occur with regularity, and should not depend, as at present, upon what is after all a mere accident—I mean

the necessity of financial legislation in any particular year."

I think, my Lords, that explains as clearly as anything possibly can be explained, what I mentioned in my few opening sentences, and if I may venture to say so, with those observations made by the Viceroy in March of last year, I most thoroughly and entirely agree. He then goes on to say:—

> "I may, perhaps, take this opportunity of mentioning that this subject appears to be closely connected with another—I mean the propriety of giving to the members of the Legislative Council of the Government of India, under proper safeguards, the right of addressing questions to Government upon matters of public interest. I make this announcement, however, subject to two important qualifications. It will, in the first place, be necessary to ascertain clearly whether the law as it now stands permits the course which we should like to adopt, and if it does not, how it should be amended. In the next place it will be necessary effectually to limit the right of interpellation in such a manner as to preclude absolutely all questions which could not be put without injury to the public interest. This is a point of the utmost importance, and will require the most careful examination."

My Lords, in all those observations of the Viceroy I most heartily and entirely concur. As the Viceroy states there, I had first to enquire whether it was possible, under the existing law, to carry out such arrangements as would be necessary in order to give effect to what the Viceroy evidently wished to be carried out; but after very serious consideration and careful examination, I entirely satisfied myself that fresh legislation was required, and that it would be impossible, under the existing law to make the alterations which the Viceroy wanted in accordance with those proposals. No doubt some legislation might have taken place as far as one of them was concerned, and it had even been proposed in India that although no alteration was necessary for the Budget of the year, yet that the Minister should carry in a measure which was practically a sham in order to give an opportunity for discussion, but it was found that that would have been against the provisions of the Act. Accordingly a Bill was prepared under my instructions, and it was quite ready to be introduced and carried last year, and it was only owing to the extreme pressure of business in the House of Commons that the Bill was not introduced and passed into law. I have therefore taken the earliest opportunity during the present Session of asking your Lordships to give the Bill a First Reading, as I do to-night. But, my Lords, as the functions of the Legislative Council were to be somewhat enlarged, it has been thought necessary and wise (and the Viceroy was of the same opinion) to give powers to the Governor General to nominate larger numbers of additional Councillors to the Legislative Council than by the present law he is able to do, and to widen the circle of persons who would be ready to assist him when the Council met to debate upon the important matters which should be brought before them. My Lords, I have hitherto confined my observations to the Council of the Governor General, purely for the sake of simplicity, but the same objects to be gained, and the same reasons for attaining them, apply exactly in the same way in principle if not in degree to the Provincial Councils. Therefore in the Bill last year there were provisions inserted for adding to the number of Councillors and to give them the power of interpellation which I have already alluded to. The Bill was not confined to the Supreme Council of India but extended also to the Councils which exist in other parts of the country. My Lords, there are other provisions in the Bill which I am now about to present to you, but I do not think I need trouble your Lordships with any explanation as regards them. They are simply intended for the purpose of clearing up doubts about certain sections of the existing Act, and I think they will be quite clear to your Lordships as to their scope and intention when you see them in print. I do not think I should be justified in taking up more of your Lordships' time in asking for leave to introduce this Bill. I thought it would be unwise to introduce it without some explanation, as otherwise it might have gone out to India and have been misunderstood.

***THE MARQUESS OF RIPON**: My Lords, I do not think the noble Viscount has been quite just to his measure when in reply to my noble Friend, Lord Herschell, he described it as a very unimportant matter.

***VISCOUNT CROSS**: I am not aware of having said so.

***THE MARQUESS OF RIPON**: I heard the noble Viscount make that statement I am sure, and I shall be within the recollection of the House. I do not think the Bill is unimportant. On the contrary, I think it is of great importance and of wide scope. Any measure which touches the functions of the Governor General and his Council and the other Councils of India must, of necessity, be of importance, especially at a time when public attention, both in India and in this country, is particularly directed to this subject; and the noble Viscount will find, I think, that before this measure can be passed through Parliament it is calculated to raise a variety of other questions connected with the constitution of these Councils. My Lords, I do not propose now to enter upon a discussion of the details of a Bill which I have not seen; but I beg to express my entire concurrence with the proposal of the noble Viscount for permitting the Budget to be discussed, whether financial legislation is proposed or not. That is an arrangement which there has been a very great desire in India to see carried out, a desire expressed by all classes; and I am extremely glad to find that the time has come when that desire is likely to be gratified. I will at present reserve my opinion with regard to the right of interpellation. A great deal, of course, will depend upon the mode in which it is regulated by the Bill. It is a very important question, and involves a change of considerable magnitude, and therefore it will require serious consideration on the part of Parliament. If I might venture to express my opinion at present, my own view is favourable to the change; but I should not like to give a definite opinion upon the matter until I see the mode in which the noble Lord proposes to carry it out. With regard to the increase of the number of nominated Members, I confess, subject of course to my not having seen the Bill, that I entertain very considerable doubts. However, I will not discuss that matter now, but will reserve, if your Lordships will allow me, any opinion I may have upon it until the Bill is in print, and we have had time to examine and study it. But, my Lords, I do think it is very important, indeed, that when changes of this kind are about to be made—for they are important changes—in the constitution of the Indian Councils, we should have the advantage of knowing the views of the Government of India upon them. The noble Viscount has given us extracts from a speech made by the Viceroy of India in his Council, and I hope the noble Viscount will be kind enough to lay a copy of that speech upon the Table of the House. There can be no objection to that; it is public property, and it will save your Lordships the trouble of searching it out in a book which is not, perhaps, easily accessible to most of your Lordships. But, my Lords, I do venture to repeat the appeal which was made by my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell), and to ask that if there have been any official or public communication (of course I am not in the least referring to private communications, and I do not ask for them) between the Government of India and the Government at home in regard to the constitution of the Indian Councils, Parliament should have the advantage of having those Papers laid before it, when this Bill comes to be discussed. My Lords, with regard to the increase of the number of members of the Council, I understood the noble Viscount to say that the present Viceroy of India was in favour of that change, but it was merely a general statement of Lord Lansdowne's opinion. If Lord Lansdowne has given that opinion in any official form, either in a speech, in the way in which he has given his opinion on the other points, or in any other manner, then I say it is only just to the Viceroy and to the Government of India—and I speak feelingly on the subject, having been myself connected with that Government—and to Parliament, that the views entertained by either Lord Lansdowne or by Lord Dufferin should be placed before us, and that we should have the opportunity of knowing how far those views agree with the proposals of the noble Viscount, and how far they fall short of or go beyond them, before we are asked to legislate upon so important a question as this.

***THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK**: My Lords, I wish to express my entire concurrence with what has been said by my noble Friend who has just sat down, both in the opinions he has expressed with regard to the two questions which my noble Friend opposite has informed your Lordships are to be dealt with in this Bill, and also with regard to the desirability of your Lordships' House being placed in possession of the opinions both of the Governor General in Council, and of my noble Friend Lord Dufferin, who formerly held that office, and his Council, if any, upon the subject. My Lords, I think it is most desirable that the Parliament of this country should be in possession of the full and complete views of the Government of India before legislating upon a question of such great importance as this question is, namely, the constitution of the Legislative Bodies in India. Now, with regard to precedent on this matter, I think that is very clear. I recollect in the year 1861, when the late Lord Halifax introduced the last measure respecting the constitution of the Legislative Councils in India, there were very complete communications between the Secretary of State for India in England and the Governor General and Council in India, and that the Papers containing the opinion of Lord Canning were laid before Parliament before that Bill was passed, and indeed the measure was proposed to Parliament mainly on the ground of the opinion of Lord Canning in the matter. I am not in any way assuming, or intending to assume, that my noble Friend opposite is not on this occasion carrying out the views of Lord Lansdowne, because I think he has satisfied your Lordships, with regard to those two provisions, that the views of Lord Lansdowne have been practically carried out; but I think it would have been better if Parliament had been in possession of full information and of the authoritative opinion of the Government of India on the subject. I entirely agree with the noble Lord in regard to the alteration of the law respecting discussion upon the Budgets in India. I believe the fact that when no legislation has to be introduced it is impossible, consistently with the Act of 1861, to have a discussion on the Budget in the Legislative Council of the Viceroy, is a mere accident, and could hardly have been intended by those who framed the Act of 1861. The main point of that Act, and the intention of the Legislature, as was apparent from a despatch sent to India at that time, was that the Legislative Council in India should not be in the nature of an Assembly to discuss any question which might be brought up by any Member of the Assembly; that it should not exercise the same functions as Parliament exercises in this country; but that the Legislative Body should be confined to considering the measures of legislation brought before it, and should not devote itself to other matters. That, my Lords, was the policy which commended itself to Parliament in consequence of a distinct evil which had existed at the time of the Mutiny by the Legislative Council under the then law having taken upon itself, somewhat, the function of a Representative Assembly, and discussed matters apart from questions of legislation. That was a distinct evil which had taken place, and it was remedied by the Act of 1861. I should like to add to what has fallen from my two noble Friends the expression of my opinion, as far as I am competent to give one, that the operation of the Act of 1861 has been very successful. My Lords, I believe that the legislation of our great dependency of India would bear favourable comparison with the legislation of any other country in the world, both as regards the nature of the enactments and as regards the care with which those enactments were considered before they were introduced into the Legislative Council, and also as regards the great care which the successive Governments in India have paid to taking every means of obtaining the opinion of the natives of India with respect to legislation before legislative measures have been passed. Therefore, my Lords, as regards the actual result of the Act of 1861, which is now to be amended, I say it has been most successful. I do not for a moment say that it may not be necessary after the lapse of so many years to adapt that legislation more to existing circumstances, but so far, I say, it has been most successful. In conclusion, I will only say, my Lords, that the measure which has been introduced by my noble Friend will receive from me, I can assure him, the most favourable consideration, and I believe, as he has stated to your Lordships, that it will make a most useful alteration in the law.

A Bill to amend the Indian Councils Act, 1861 :— Was presented by the Viscount Cross; read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Thursday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, February 21, 1890.

THE OCCUPATION OF GILGIT.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government will lay upon the Table the Indian Foreign Office Memorandum, dated 6th May, 1888, referring to the occupation of Gilgit, and which Memorandum was referred to by the Viceroy of India in his observations at the Council for making laws and regulations, held at Simla, in September last?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In the question of the hon. Member he asks for the production of a confidential Memorandum to the Government of India, on the ground that it was mentioned by the Viceroy of India in the Council held at Simla in September last. The speech of the Viceroy referred to in the question was made in support of a Bill to prevent the disclosure of official documents. The Memorandum asked for was referred to by the Viceroy as "a recent case in which a particularly scandalous disclosure of official information has taken place." Such a reference does not entitle the hon. Member, as he seems to think, to the production of the document, to which, on public grounds, the Secretary of State cannot consent.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I asked the right hon. Gentleman whether, as a matter of fact, the document has not been published and circulated throughout the whole of India?

*SIR J. GORST: That is exactly what I said. A document purporting to be the Memorandum in question has been published, in consequence of some gross breach of official secresy, in the newspapers in India. But that is quite another thing from the Government of India publishing the authentic text of the Memorandum as an official document.

ORIENTAL PLATE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with respect to Clause 4 of "The Revenue Act, 1884," which enacts that certain Oriental plate shall be exempted from assay in the United Kingdom, whether the construction put upon the clause by the officers of Her Majesty's Customs is that, if intended for exposure for sale, such wares must be hall-marked, and therefore assayed; whether it is the practice on the part of the officers of Her Majesty's Customs to require an affidavit on the part of importers that such wares are for private use, and not for purpose of sale; whether, if for purpose of sale, such wares are detained by the officers of Customs and sent to the Goldsmiths' Hall, or other assay office, where, if found to be below standard, they are required to be re-exported or to be smashed; and whether he will direct that, subject to the payment of the proper duties of Customs, articles of Foreign plate which, in the opinion of the Commissioners of Customs, may be properly described as hand-chased, inlaid, bronzed, or filigree work of Oriental pattern, shall be admitted for purposes of sale free from the obligation of assay and hall-marking?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I think the hon. Member is under some misapprehension as to the facts of the case, because I must answer the first, second, and third paragraphs of his question in the negative. It is not necessary to issue additional instructions to the Commissioners of Customs, because they have already the power to do what is requisite, and I am informed that they exercise that power. In order, however, to remove any cause of grievance on the part of our Indian fellow-subjects, I may assure the hon. Member that if any case is brought before me it shall receive my full consideration.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will inquire whether a number of casquets were not detained recently until I myself, who was the importer, was able to make a declaration?

MR. GOSCHEN: I have no doubt that the casquets were detained as the hon. Member says. I will, however, make a specific inquiry as to the matter which he has brought under my notice.

Monday, February 24, 1890.

THE CHIN LUSHAI EXPEDITION.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether there is any truth in the statement that the Punjab coolies for the expedition from Chittagong towards Burma were so neglected and exposed on the way there that the majority of them were incapacitated by sickness before they joined; and, if so, whether inquiry has been made to fix the responsibility?

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I have also to ask the Under Secretary of State whether he has yet received any reply from the Government of India as to the alleged serious mortality amongst the troops engaged in the Chin Lushai expedition; and, if so, can he make any statement as to the truth of the telegram in the *Times* of February 10th on that subject?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I will answer both of the questions at the same time. The Secretary of State has received information from the Government of India that the statements in question alluded to in the question of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy are wholly incorrect, and that the sickness on the Chin Lushai expedition has been greatly exaggerated.

STATE OF THE CROPS IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, owing to the deficiency of rain in October to December 1889 in Southern India, the collectors and other revenue officials in the southern districts of the Presidency of Madras who were absent on leave from their stations and during the Christmas holidays were, at the end of December last, recalled by the Government of Madras to their respective headquarters, to inspect personally and to report at once upon the present state of the crops in their respective districts, and what the outcome of the failure of the rains is likely to be; whether such Reports have been received by the Madras Government; and whether the Secretary of State will lay them upon the Table?

*SIR J. GORST: The statement in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is correct as regards eight districts to the south of Madras, in which up to the last week in December the rainfall of the North East Monsoon had been deficient. During the last week of December, however, there was good rain over the threatened districts; matters have changed for the better, and prospects are reported generally fair. The detailed Reports by the district officers have not yet been received by the Secretary of State.

RAILWAY FROM CHITTAGONG TO ASSAM.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State for India will lay upon the Table the Despatch received by him from the Government of India in July last, recommending the granting of a concession of land 7,500 miles in extent to a syndicate of railway promoters, as one of the conditions for the construction of a railway from Chittagong to Assam, together with any Correspondence thereon; and whether he will state if the Secretary of State has adopted or rejected the recommendations of the Government of India?

SIR J. GORST: In July last the Secretary of State received a Despatch from the Government of India on the subject of the Chittagong-Assam Railway. The contents of this Despatch are incorrectly described in the question. The matter is still under the consideration of the Secretary of State in Council.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman that the contents of the Despatch are correctly or incorrectly described in the question?

SIR J. GORST: I said that they are incorrectly described.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: As the statement has been repeatedly made, can the right hon. Gentleman tell the House what are the correct contents of the Despatch?

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir. I cannot state the contents of the Despatch until the matter has been decided. It is not usual to give such information until a decision has been arrived at.

Tuesday, February 25, 1890.

INDIAN SUBJECTS CLASSED AS "ALIENS" BY THE TRANSVAAL GOVERNMENT.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is the case, as reported in August last, the Transvaal Government has classed Her Majesty's Indian subjects as "Aliens," and forbidden them to reside within the Transvaal; and, if so, what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to redress this grievance?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): At the request of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for India I will answer the question. It is the case that the Government of the South African Republic decided that traders from British India should be subject to the laws and regulations of the Republic affecting Chinese, Arabs, and other Oriental aliens. These Indians have not been forbidden to reside within the South African Republic; but are at present subject to serious restrictions under a law which was passed in 1886, for the removal or mitigation of which Her Majesty's High Commissioner is now in communication with the Government of the Republic.

Thursday, February 27, 1890.

BOMBAY—FACTORY LABOUR.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any action has yet been taken on the Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the grievances of the factory workers in Bombay; whether he is aware that the average time worked in the Indian cotton mills is 80 hours per week, as against 56 hours in Lancashire, and that great indignation exists among the Lancashire operatives at the competition to which they are exposed by labour working 80 hours per week in one part of the Empire while they are restricted by law to 56 hours; whether he is aware that, on 24th October last year, a petition was sent to the Indian Government by the Bombay factory workers asking for a reduction of their excessive hours of labour, and that in the future they claim that all mill hands be allowed one day's rest on Sunday, and that half an hour's rest be allowed them at noon; that all mills should commence work at 6.30 a.m., and cease working at sunset; and that compensation should be afforded for accidents; whether he is aware that very young children are employed 80 hours per week, to the extreme detriment of their health; whether he is aware that one mill manager writes—

> "That he had seen children so small, working 80 hours per week, that he had taken them up in his arms, put them in the scales, and found them to weigh from 42 to 45 pounds only,";

and that factory managers in Bombay who have had experience of slavery in South America say that such slavery is mild compared with that which exists in the factory system of Bombay; and whether the Government will undertake that the recommendations of the Factory Commission shall promptly be carried out?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): My answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative. A Bill on the lines stated last Session in Parliamentary Paper 162 was introduced into the Indian Legislature on the 31st of January last. My answer to the second paragraph of the question is that the hours of labour of adult males in India are as unrestricted as they are in Lancashire. My answer to the third paragraph is that such a petition may have been received by the Government of India, who would give it every consideration, but it has not been forwarded to the Secretary of State. My answer to the fourth paragraph of the hon. Member's question is that according to the existing law no child can be employed in Indian factories for more than 54 hours a week, and the Secretary of State cannot understand how such a case as that described in paragraph 5 can have occurred. But if the hon. Member will furnish his authority the Secretary of State will cause inquiry to be made. In regard to the last paragraph of the question the Bill for commending the Indian Factory Act in the sense I have indicated is now before the Indian Legislature.

*MR. S. SMITH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that the Bill now before the Government of India raises the ages of children entering mills from 7 to 9 years, and allows them to work 11 hours a day, from 9 to 12, while in Lancashire they only work 5½ hours a day?

SIR J. GORST: I am afraid that I cannot answer any question as to the contents of the Bill in question without notice. The hon. Member had better put a notice down on the Paper.

*MR. C. GRAHAM (Lanark, N. W.): Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that no restriction in regard to the hours of labour exists in India? Is it in his power to advise the Indian Government to introduce some law whereby Her Majesty's subjects in different parts of the Empire shall not be reduced to slavery?

SIR J. GORST: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to give me notice of that question.

Friday, February 28, 1890.

THE DELHI-UMBALLA-KALKA RAILWAY.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he can lay Papers upon the Table showing by whom and on what terms the railway direct from Delhi to Umballa and Kalka, at the foot of the hills, has been taken up; whether the use of any part of the Grand Trunk and Bridges has been conceded to the undertakers; and whether anything has been arranged for carrying the rail on into the hills?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): Papers containing the contract with the Delhi and Kalka Railway were presented to Parliament on the 28th of May, 1889. I believe that the hon. Member will find the Papers in the Library. As to the second paragraph of the question, no use of any part of the Grand Trunk and Bridges has been conceded to the undertakers, so far as the Secretary of State is informed. In regard to the third paragraph, no arrangement has been made for carrying the rail on into the hills.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 3, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.—(No. 28.)

SECOND READING.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I wish to ask the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India whether he would postpone the Second Reading of his Bill to Thursday next, because, unfortunately, the Papers he promised have not yet reached us; at all events, I have not seen them, nor has my noble Friend behind me.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): With regard to the Papers to which my noble Friend refers, I am sorry there should have been any mistake made. But I should like to explain to the House, because I think it ought to be known, that they were sent to the Queen's Printers early last week. I had a copy of them in my hand last night, and I had been told distinctly that they would be delivered on Saturday morning. It was my desire that that should be done, as the discussion upon the Bill was coming on. It is quite clear some mistake has been made in the matter, and I can only say that I had nothing to do with it. I will, of course, postpone the Second Reading of the Bill to Thursday next as the noble Earl desires.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I need hardly say that I am quite satisfied the delay in delivering the Papers has arisen from an accident.

Second Reading put off till Thursday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 3, 1890.

COOLIES IN ASSAM TEA GARDENS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the high rate of mortality among the coolies employed in the tea gardens in India; whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of Dr. Eteson, late Sanitary Commissioner of Assam, that—

> "The ratio of sickness and mortality among the tea garden labourers as a class has been always very great,"

and that—

> "In many gardens it is above what is counted a frightful epidemic in civilised countries;"

that

> "In 1886 the largest death-rate in any garden was 270 per 1,000, while in the following year even this terrible figure was far outstripped, for in one garden the chances of life and death were almost equally divided, there having been a mortality of 465·9 per 1,000;"

that the Civil Surgeon of Debrugurh, in his Report for 1884, states that—

> "The conditions of child life in a tea garden are altogether so unfavourable that the wonder is how so many children succeed in passing childhood's stage;"

whether his attention has been drawn to a case which happened in 1886, in the Mesaijan Garden in Lakimpur, in which the Deputy Commissioner states that—

> "A large body of coolies left the garden, and came to the station complaining of ill-treatment. They stated that both men and women had been flogged; in the case of women, that they had been tied to a post in the porch of the manager's house, their clothes lifted up to their waists, and that they had been beaten on the bare buttocks with a stirrup leather by the orders of the assistant manager;"

whether he is aware that in 1886 there was in existence in some tea gardens a dungeon in which refractory coolies were confined and tied down with ropes; and whether he can state that such abuses are now prevented; whether he is aware that, although by Section 116 of the Act the coolie is entitled to one day of rest every week, there is a tacit understanding between employer and labourer that the rights of the latter under the section would not be claimed, and that the Government is believed to support the planter in this arrangement; and what measures the Government propose to take under these circumstances?

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will, at the same time, answer a question which I have placed upon the Paper on the same subject. I beg to ask the Under Secretary, with reference to the employment of coolies in the Assam tea gardens, whether the Inland Emigration Act of 1873 limited the term of labourers under contract enforced by penal laws to three years, with many provisions for the protection of such labourers, and at the same time, with a view to the gradual substitution of free labour, provided an alternative system of free recruiting under ordinary engagements, not enforceable by penal methods; whether the more recent law has extended the term of enforced labour to five years; whether complaints have reached him that the provision in favour of free recruiting and free labour has been evaded by a system under which labourers enlisted without the safeguards of the labour law are brought to the nearest part of the Assam territory, and there, when far from their homes and when they have not the means of returning, are induced to sign long labour contracts, before they have seen the gardens where they are to be employed or have had any opportunity of offering their labour in the free labour market; whether he is aware that of late years the labourers compulsorily employed on many gardens have suffered terribly; and whether any steps are being taken to mitigate the severity of the system introduced under the last law?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In answering these questions the Secretary of State wishes me to say that questions on the condition of the coolies in the Assam tea gardens are frequently asked in this House. They are based on facts picked out of the official Reports for many years past, and calculated to give an exaggerated impression. They are suggested to hon. Members either with the object of procuring the substitution of a system of free recruiting for the safeguards of the Act of 1882, or with that of stopping migration from Bengal to Assam. They give a most incorrect impression of the general condition of the coolies. As to the specific allegations contained in these questions, I may say, in answer to the first question of the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), yes; the mortality has engaged the most anxious attention of the Secretary of State and of the Government of India for many years. My answer to the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question is that the Report of Dr. Eteson refer to byegone times and particular districts. The death-rate on an individual garden is often frightfully enhanced by an epidemic of cholera. In answer to the third paragraph of the question of the hon. Member, I have to say that I was questioned on this case last year, and I then stated that the manager in question was prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced to 10 months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine. My reply to the fourth paragraph of the question is that the Secretary of State has no reason to suppose that any such abuse exists now. In answer to the fifth paragraph, the Secretary of State is not aware of any such tacit understanding, and is certainly not supported by the Government. In reply to the questions of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell), my answer to paragraphs 1 and 2 is in the affirmative. As regards paragraph 3, such complaints have been made, and have been carefully investigated by the Chief Commissioner of Assam and reported by him to be greatly exaggerated. This question illustrates one of the difficulties to be encountered in doing away with the safeguards of the Act of 1882. In regard to the general question asked by both hon. Members, I have repeatedly stated to the House that the Government of India has been for some time engaged, under the direction of the Secretary of State, in making the most careful investigation into the condition of the coolies in the Assam tea gardens, and the working of the Act of 1882, with special reference to the question whether that Act shall be continued any longer. As to the general condition of the coolies, the House will perhaps like to hear the evidence of an entirely impartial witness, the Rev. Isaac Row, Secretary to the Anglo-Indian Evangelization Society. He writes in the Indian newspapers as follows:—

> "I am much interested in the correspondence in your columns with reference to the tea planters of Upper Assam, and their treatment of the coolies under their charge, and I shall be glad if, in the interest of the cause of truth, you will kindly allow me to give my testimony on this subject. I think I may fairly claim to speak with some authority, as during the past two years I have spent nearly 12 months in the Brahmaputra Valley, and during that time travelled very widely over the country. My observations, therefore, have not been superficial and confined merely to a few gardens in the more settled districts; but my work as a Minister of the Anglo-Indian Evangelization Society led me to visit a very large number of out-of-the-way gardens, seldom, if ever, visited by strangers, and my testimony is that of an impartial witness, equally the friend both of the coolie and of the planter. As a rule, all the coolies that I saw, numbering tens of thousands, were remarkably well cared for by their employers, and I could specify many instances of special kindness and consideration on the part of the latter, of which I was myself an eye-witness. I am quite sure that there are hundreds of starving poor in England to-day who would be most thankful if they could only be as well fed and as well housed as are the great bulk of the people employed on the tea gardens of Upper Assam. I say this the more emphatically, because, in former years, I laboured much among the destitute poor of London. The misrepresentations so persistently made with reference to this subject are a great wrong, not only to the planters, but to the coolies themselves, of whom there are tens of thousands half-starved in over-crowded districts, in Bengal and elsewhere, who should be encouraged and helped to emigrate to Assam, where they might readily find lucrative and easy employment."

SIR G. CAMPBELL: As the right hon. Gentleman has thought fit to read a long passage from an advocate of the continuance of the system, may I call his attention to the 4th paragraph of my question—

> "Whether he is aware that of late years the labourers compulsorily employed on many gardens have suffered terribly."

No doubt the hon. Member for Flintshire did quote statistics which are three or four years old, but I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether during the last three or four years there has not been an excess of mortality in some of these gardens?

*SIR J. GORST: The question of the hon. Member is whether I am aware that of late years the labourers compulsorily employed on many gardens have suffered terribly. In the opinion of the Secretary of State that statement is the result of a misapprehension.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I think I am bound to say that, personally, I have made no such statement. The words are not mine. All I ask of the right hon. Gentleman is that he shall tell me whether the fact is so or not. I repeat that I made no statement on the subject.

SIR J. GORST made no rejoinder.

THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND AFRICA.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for

India whether the Indian Government has occupied any part of Africa on the coast opposite to Aden, or sent any troops there on its own account, or on account of the British or Egyptian Governments; and whether, as reported in the newspapers, a small force of Indian soldiers were lately engaged in some expedition into the Hara country and suffered considerable loss on their return; and, if so, what was the object of the expedition? In putting this question, I should like, with the permission of the House, to explain that I had not forgotten the observation of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that the time of the House would be saved by putting certain questions as to facts to the heads of Departments at their offices instead of inside this House. A fortnight ago I put a question to the Under Secretary for India on this subject, and I have not yet been favoured with an answer.

SIR J. GORST: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that if he has not received an answer, it has not been my fault. In answer to the first part of the question, I have to say that small detachments of troops from the garrison at Aden occupa the ports of Zeyla, Bulhar, and Berbere on the Somali coast. With regard to thy second paragraph of the question, the object of the expedition was to punish the authors of a raid upon Bulhar in August last, in which 100 persons were killed.

BURMA AND SIAM.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any, and, if so, what, progress has been made in the delimitation of the respective protectorates of this country and of the Chinese Empire in the Shan States, under the provisions of the Treaty of 1886 between Her Majesty and the Sovereign of China; and whether it is the fact, as has been recently stated in the newspapers, that steps are being taken to determine certain questions of boundaries between British Burma and Siam?

*SIR J. FERGUSON: No steps have been taken to demarcate the frontier between China and Burma; but surveys are being made by the two Governments concerned of the frontiers of Siam and Burma.

Tuesday, March 4, 1890.

RIOTING IN THE PUNJAB.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he will lay upon the Table the Papers relating to certain disturbances and rioting in Rohtak, in the Punjab, in August and September last, and the Reports of the trial of certain persons accused in connection therewith, and of the appeal and judgment thereon?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has no Papers relating to the riot at Rohtak. The persons implicated were dealt with by the ordinary tribunals, and no Report of the trials or judgments would, in ordinary course, be sent to the India Office.

EXCISE ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA.

MR. CAINE (Barrow): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he has yet received the reply of the Indian Government to the Despatch of the Secretary of State for India, "Revenue No. 52, Excise Administration. Resolution of the House of Commons," dated 16th May, 1889; when it will be laid upon the Table of the House; and will it be circulated to Members?

SIR J. GORST: The Despatch has just been received, and if the hon. Member will move for it, it will be laid on the Table.

THE VOLUNTEER FORCE OF INDIA.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State for India is aware that, while admission to the Volunteer Force of India is refused to the inhabitants of that country as such, Indian Christians are permitted to become members of these organisations; and whether, if he finds the facts are as stated above, the Secretary of State will give instructions to the Government of India to remove a disqualification which depends solely upon the profession of a particular religion, and make it possible for any Indians who may desire to do so to join the Volunteer Forces of the country?

SIR J. GORST: No, Mr. Speaker. There is no such exceptions in favour of Christians. All natives of India are alike eligible for admission to Volunteer Corps.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 6*th March*, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL—(No. 28.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (VISCOUNT CROSS)**: My Lords, as I had the opportunity of explaining the provisions of this Bill to your Lordships when it was read a first time, I do not propose on the present occasion to take up further time in explanation, and I will therefore simply move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."

***THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK**: My Lords, I have read with great attention both the Bill which the noble Viscount opposite has laid upon your Lordships' Table, the Second Reading of which is now moved, and also the Papers which he has laid upon your Lordships' Table in connection with the Bill. I am glad to be able to give to the Bill my cordial support. My Lords, this question of extending the functions of the legislative Councils of India is not a new one. It has been brought for many years to the notice of the Government of India by Public Bodies of various kinds, the Chambers of Commerce of the different Presidencies, and other Associations of different kinds, and latterly by the Congress which has met in different parts of India since 1885, that an opportunity should be afforded whether legislation is brought before the Council or not for an annual discussion of the financial condition of the country, and the financial proposals of the Government. It has also more recently been suggested, and the suggestion came quite as much, I think, from the Viceroy and his Council as it has come from the public, that some opportunity should be given whereby members of the Legislative Councils might address questions to the Government, as a course which might enable erroneous rumours to be at once corrected, promptly and with authority, and so avoid agitation and the danger of false rumours being disseminated throughout the country. Besides this, there have of late been proposals made to widen the area of the Legislative Council—I mean by that to increase considerably the number of the non-official members, and it has also been suggested that some system of election or selection other than that of simple nomination should be applied for the choice of the non-official members. My Lords, here in this country and also in India the public has been led to suppose that some action would be taken by the Government in these different directions, or, at any rate, in respect of part of them. So long back as the year 1885 a statesman who filled the office at one time of Secretary of State for India, Lord Randolph Churchill, advocated the appointment of a Committee to consider the different Acts which regulate the machinery of the Government of India, including the Legislative Councils. He, indeed, pledged the then Government, if they had remained in office, to propose the appointment of such a Committee. In the following year, 1886, my noble Friend, the Earl of Kimberley, who was then Secretary of State for India, asked your Lordships to agree to the appointment of a Joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament for the purpose of considering the subject and those Acts. That proposal was agreed to by this House, and I think some of your Lordships were appointed members of that Committee. The proposal, however, fell through in consequence of the question never having, from some reason or another, come before the other House of Parliament to obtain its concurrence. In India, my Lords, my noble Friend, Lord Dufferin, after two years of office, made a speech on the occasion of the Jubilee, in which there was a paragraph so remarkable that I venture to read it to your Lordships, because I feel in dealing with this most difficult subject that whatever experience I may have had in India is of the past—comparatively speaking long ago—and that your Lordships would naturally be guided far more by the deliberate opinion expressed by Lord Dufferin after having served the office of Viceroy for some time than by any opinion that should come from my own own personal authority. Lord Dufferin said—

> "Wide and broad indeed are the new fields in which the Government of India is called upon to labour, but no longer as of aforetime need it labour alone. Within the period we are reviewing education has done its work, and we are surrounded on all sides by native gentlemen of great attainments and intelligence, from whose hearty, loyal, and honest co-operation we may hope to derive the greatest benefit. In fact, to an administration so peculiarly situated as ours, their advice, assistance, and solidarity are essential to the successful exercise of its functions. Nor do I regard with any other feelings than those of approval and goodwill their natural aspiration to be more extensively associated with their English rulers in the administration of their own domestic affairs; and glad and happy should I be if circumstances permitted me to extend and to place upon a wider and more logical footing the political status which was so wisely given a generation ago by that great statesman, Lord Halifax, to such Indian gentlemen as by their influence, their acquirements, and the confidence of their fellow-countrymen were marked out as useful adjuncts to our Legislative Councils."

Now, my Lords, a year later, in 1888, Lord Dufferin on the eve of his giving up the office of Viceroy, alluded to what he had said on the occasion of the Jubilee, using words which were well weighed, and which I cannot believe were uttered by Lord Dufferin without previous communication with the Government at home. On the occasion of St. Andrew's Day's dinner, having quoted the speech which he made at the Jubilee, Lord Dufferin said, after some other words—

> "I am not the less convinced that we could, with advantage draw more largely than we have hitherto done on native intelligence and native assistance in the discharge of our duties. I have had ample opportunities of gauging and appreciating to its full extent the measure of good sense, of practical wisdom, and of experience possessed by the leading men of India, both among the great nobles on the one hand, and among the leisured and professional classes on the other, and I have now submitted to the Home Authorities some personal suggestions in harmony with the foregoing views."

My Lords, such having been the intentions of the Government at home, and such having been the utterances of the Viceroys of India, in respect to enlarging the functions and widening the basis of the Legislative Councils, I do not think that the Bill now introduced by the Secretary of State for India can be said either to be uncalled for or in any sense premature. I do not think that, after a perusal of the opinions given by Lord Dufferin which I have presented to your Lordships and placed on the Table, and the opinions of the present Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, after communication with the several Local Governments of India, your Lordships can consider that the proposals contained in the Bill have not been most carefully examined into. They have undoubtedly met with the approval and concurrence of the two succeeding Viceroys, and, with a few slight exceptions, they have received the concurrence of the Local Governments of India. Therefore, I am sure that your Lordships may be satisfied that in giving, as is proposed by this Bill, additional power to the Legislative Councils for the discussion of the Budgets, and also in giving them the power of interpellation under certain restrictions, your Lordships will be doing a wise act, and an act which will strengthen the hands of the Government in India. On the subject of interpellation I should like to make only one remark, and that is, that I agree with the proposal made by the Bill that it shall not be competent to the member who makes the interpellation to follow it up by a Motion, and to divide the Council upon the question. If a latitude of that sort were to be allowed, it would have the effect of making these Legislative Councils in India, which are intended to be, and which are, practical bodies, into bodies, I am afraid, in the nature of debating societies, because there could not, in India, be the same result as there is in this country of Motions followed by Divisions. India is a long way from having what is called a Responsible Government, namely, an Administration composed of men who possess a majority in the Representative Assembly, and, therefore, Motions and Divisions in India would be more in the nature of discussions without any practical result, than in the nature of the practical business which alone ought to be carried on in the Legislative Assemblies. My Lords, in a proposal that I have seen, which was elaborated by the Congress which met lately at Bombay, it is proposed that there shall be an opportunity given in Legislative Council for such Motions to be made and Divisions to be taken; and those who have made this proposal in India, which, I believe, it is not impossible may come before Parliament here, appear to have seen the same difficulty that I have pointed out—as to the practical result to such Motions; because they propose that in case the opinion of the majority should not be concurred in by the Viceroy or the head of the Local Government, they should have the power of over-ruling it; but that, at the same time, an appeal should lie to this country to a Standing Committee of the other House of Parliament, which is to be constituted for the purpose of hearing such appeals, and that the Standing Committee should have the power to call persons before it and take evidence, and should then report their opinion to the other House of Parliament on the subject. I think that such a proposal as this, making so fundamental a change in the British Constitution, giving such executive functions to a Standing Committee of the other House of Parliament, need not be discussed further. It only shows, my Lords, how difficult it is, however able the men may be—and some of the men who are endeavouring to deal with this subject are men of great ability and great education—to succeed in devising a plan which would enable at the present time such Motions to be made in the Legislative Councils in India, and provide an appeal to any authority in this country excepting as now to the authority which has the duty of advising Her Majesty on all Indian affairs, namely, the Secretary of State for India in Council. While I say this, I must remind your Lordships that there is ample power by the present law whenever any legislation takes place in any of these Councils for Divisions to be taken upon any clauses of any Bill which is before the Council. So far, my Lords, as to the extension of the functions of the Legislative Councils in India. I now come to another part of the subject, and that is, to use the words, I think, of the noble Viscount in addressing the Governor General in Council on the subject—

> "Her Majesty's Government have been of opinion that the time is come when it is desirable that public opinion should be more largely and variously represented in India."

For the purpose of carrying out that view it is proposed in this Bill, and as I believe rightly proposed, to increase the number of the non-official members of the different Councils—the number of the non-official members of the Council of the Viceroy to a moderate extent, and the number of members of the local Legislatures to a greater extent. My Lords, I believe this change is a wise one. It is curious to look back even in my own personal experience to what was the case not very many years ago. In the year 1861, when the present law was passed, the great difficulty which was anticipated was to find natives of India who would be fit to be members of the new Legislative Councils. They were expected to be exceedingly few, and it was supposed at that time that they would not be of any great value because it was supposed, if they were put into the Councils, all they would do would be to agree with the opinions of the Englishmen around them. When I was in India 10 years after that, in 1872, I found that there were in India a certain number, I cannot say very many, but there were a certain number of men who, from their education, their knowledge of English, and their ability and position, were capable of rendering most valuable assistance as members of the Supreme Legislative Council, and still more as members of the Local Legislatures, and as regards the apprehension entertained in 1861, that the native members of the Legislative Councils would not freely express their opinions, I am sure any one who has watched of late the proceedings of the Legislative Councils, especially in regard to two very important measures, one affecting the land in Bengal, and the other affecting the rights of the landowners in the Province of Oudh, would find it impossible to deny that the opinions held by the native members were pressed with great ability and firmness, and with perfect independence in the Legislative Council. Therefore, the apprehension that was felt in 1861 has been found to be removed by time, and undoubtedly there must be at the present moment very many more native gentlemen in India of education, ability, and position, who are capable of being usefully placed in the Legislative Council than these were 12 years ago, when I was myself in India. At the same time, your Lordships should not, I think, suppose that the extension of high education in India, although very remarkable, is very general. No doubt there is a very large number of natives of India who year by year acquire a moderate knowledge of our English education and a moderate education in the literature and general knowledge of the West; but, at the same time, judging by the actual Returns, and this is one of the things that can be reduced to actual proof, there does not appear to be a very large number of men who have received what may be called a thorough English education even now. I have seen some very remarkable figures which have been taken from the records of the Universities in India. Almost every man in India who receives a high English education goes to one or other of the Universities, and a calculation has been made of the total number of men who have entered at the Universities in the 20 years ending with the year 1883. I have added to that, by a calculation of my own, an estimate of the number that have probably joined from the year 1883 down to the present time, adding something to the average of the former years in order to allow for the undoubted increase in the number of those who now go through the Universities. The first Arts Examination at the Universities does not give any very great test of high education; however, as far as I can make out, from the time the Universities were first constituted up to the present date—that is to say, in a period of 27 years—about 17,000 natives of India have passed the first Arts Examination; that is, out of about 80,000,000, which is the whole male population of Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and the North-Western Provinces. The next examination is that of B.A., which is a higher standard. Of course, by those who know the value of the B.A. examination, it may be said that there are many men who have passed the B.A. examination who are not thoroughly instructed men. The total number of natives of India who have passed the B.A. examination since the year 1863 is about 7,000 out of the 80,000,000 males of those four Provinces. I now come to the last examination, namely, the examination for the degree of M.A., which is very severe, and any native who has passed that examination is a very well-educated man in English knowledge and in the literature and science of the West. A very few more than 1,000 men out of the 80,000,000 of male population have passed the M.A. Examination in the 27 years. Your Lordships will see then, that although a knowledge of English has been diffused over a very large area, yet the number of really highly-educated men in English knowledge and literature is exceedingly few as compared with the vast population of that country. Now, my Lords, I do not mean for a moment to assert that it is only the gentlemen who have passed those Examinations whose opinions and assistance are valuable in respect of Indian affairs. Far from it. Perhaps the very soundest opinions upon all Indian affairs may be obtained from men who have Eastern knowledge, Eastern experience, and who thoroughly understand the country in which they live. But I only mention those facts as showing that as regards the particular class of education which is now coming so much to the front, the number of men who possess it is not so very large. My Lords, in regard to this subject, I have alluded before to the meetings of the Congress called the International Congress, which has met annually since the year 1885, and it would, I think, be wrong in me to address any remarks to your Lordships upon this question without saying a few words upon that Congress, because it has attracted so much public attention both here and in India. I know some of the leading natives in India who have taken a prominent part in that Congress, and I am perfectly satisfied of the loyalty and thoroughly good and hearty disposition towards England and the English Administration, which is felt on the part of a great many Indian gentlemen who have been concerned in the Congress. I have read a great many of their speeches and have been struck with the ability and, generally speaking, the moderation with which they have discussed somewhat difficult questions. I think that the way in which the Congress is assembled, and the necessarily short time they have for discussing important questions has very much militated against its usefulness and—for I wish to speak quite frankly upon this question—I greatly regret to observe that some of the publications issued and circulated by the officers of the Congress, not, so far as I am aware, from any deliberate intention on the part of the Congress as a Body, but certainly issued on the part of its officers, if not with their authority, have been couched in language which I believe, if read by any large number of the natives, or to any great extent, by the natives of India might be decidedly dangerous. My Lords, I am not one of those who regret these assemblies. I think there are advantages to be derived from having free expression of opinion by the educated classes of India on public affairs, but along with those advantages we see from the experience of the Congresses how difficult it is to form, even for such temporary purposes, anything like representative Bodies among the natives of India. It will be within the knowledge of those who are acquainted with the subject that this Congress has not been without its disadvantages, because it has excited very considerable differences of opinion in various parts of India, where the natives are of different religious opinions, and especially among the Mahommedan subjects of Her Majesty in India. Now, my Lords, this Congress, and also others, have recommended a much larger extension of the numbers of the Legislative Councils. I believe myself that the Bill goes far enough in that direction. I believe there would be great difficulty in making any much larger increase in the number of the Legislative Council of the Viceroy, and a substantial increase has been made in the Local Councils. Therefore, I think, the noble Viscount in the Bill which he has laid on your Lordships' Table has provided fully for all present needs in respect of the increase of numbers. I wish to point out to your Lordships that there is an essential difference between the work done by the Supreme Legislative Council and the Local Councils. They require in my opinion very different treatment. The principle of the Indian Government for many years now past, since the time of Lord Mayo, has been to decentralise local affairs, providing for their management by the people of each municipality or district, and to give to the Local Governments very much more power over their own affairs than they used to have in old times. It is only by the legislation of 1861 that the Local Legislatures have had any power given them at all, and it is to them that the task is now given of managing local affairs for their own Governments. It is obvious there would be very little difficulty found in selecting natives of India belonging to the Local Governments living in the different Presidencies who would be fit and able to give the most valuable assistance to the Local Legislatures. But the case is very different in regard to the Supreme Council. In India we do not think it necessary to have a programme put forward every year, as we have in the Queen's Speech in this country, and to be constantly altering the laws of the land. Legislation is only carried on in India when it is really required, and it may be confined to one or two different parts of India only. I remember myself during one year being occupied nearly the whole time with the Central Provinces on the one side, and with Burma on the other. I have not seen any plan or scheme under which it would be possible to appoint anything like representative Members to the Supreme Legislative Council who could be expected to supply the whole of the information which would be wanted in such an enormous country as India, where the subjects to be dealt with are so wide and various, and where the people are so separated in interests from each other. Then how is the work done? The main part of the work in the Supreme Council in India is not done by speeches in the Council. The main part of the work is done by circulating the proposals for laws to the different Governments, with instructions to them to get opinions from all classes of people respecting those proposals, and then, having received all the information they possibly can from outside, to appoint a Committee for the purpose of working out the details; and the matter is only brought before the Supreme Council when the greater part of the work is already done. That work is necessarily heavy, and it occasionally happens that two or three years pass before projects of laws are ripe for decision. But the work is done with a full knowledge of the opinions of those who know most about the subject. I have not yet seen, as I said before, any plan by which the Supreme Legislative Council of India could be supplemented by any persons purporting to represent the different parts of that vast country. My Lords, it would, in my opinion, be injurious to the interests of India if the present state of the law should be altered, and the Sessions of the Supreme Council confined to Calcutta. Everybody knows that Calcutta does not in any way represent the whole of India. The people who live in Calcutta probably know less about India than a great many of your Lordships who pay attention to the affairs of that country but who have never been there. It was always intended that the Legislative Council of the Viceroy might meet wherever necessary, so that they might on the spot get all the information which was desirable before passing laws. I well remember myself when I was in India holding a Legislative Council, lasting, I think, a week, at the City of Agra, when several matters affecting important interests of the North Western Provinces were discussed, and I had the advantage of having the presence of the Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces in the Council, and also of non-official communications with those who were conversant with the matters we had to decide. My Lords, I should consider that any plan in which any attempt should be made to form a representative Supreme Council, and to make that Council sit at Calcutta, and nowhere else, is a plan which would be injurious to the interests of India. I have seen a plan which is called, I think, a skeleton scheme, proposed by the Congress at Bombay, for the purpose of establishing such a Council as I deprecate, and I have examined it with all the attention which the expression of opinion of such a Body is entitled to; but I must inform your Lordships that I can in no way recommend this plan to the consideration of Parliament. It is a plan under which a system of representation based upon population is to be carried out throughout the whole of India. There is to be a registration of electors; there are to be Electoral Councils; there is to be representation of minorities; and there is to be vote by Ballot. And the result will be the selection of some 40 members purporting to represent the different parts of India, to form part of the Supreme Legislative Council. My Lords, I must express my deliberate opinion that in the first place such a system as this, if introduced into India, is entirely unsuited to the present condition of the country, and in the second place that were the Councils of India to elect representatives in such a manner as that, it would be, in my opinion, a serious political danger. My Lords, I submit that the basis on which this scheme rests, namely, the allotting of representation in proportion to population in India, is one which cannot be accepted by anyone who has any real knowledge of the whole interests of the country. The results would be somewhat peculiar, and the mere statement of them, I think, would be sufficient to satisfy your Lordships of the impracticability of any such scheme as this. Half of the whole number of members to be elected would be elected from Bengal and Madras, leaving the whole of the rest of India to be represented by only the other half. To take another way of putting it: The province of Bengal with Assam would, under this plan, have as many members of this proposed Assembly as the provinces of Bombay and Madras, with, added to them, the Punjaub. Anyone who knows anything of political importance of the different parts of India will see at once that such a scheme would not give the necessary political weight to those parts of India which are of the greatest political importance. My Lords, I conceive in respect to the increase of the numbers of these legislative Bodies in India the wisest course is to work upon the lines upon which we have already gone, namely, decentralisation. I think that the first object should be to strengthen the hands of Local Legislatures, and I would even go further than the noble Viscount has gone in his Bill to give power to the Members of the Local Legislatures, but I would leave the Supreme Council very much as it now stands until some wider experience than we have at present is possessed of the effect of the measure upon the Local Legislatures. Having expressed that opinion upon the plan which I have seen, I wish to say, my Lords, that, on the other hand, I regret very much that the Government has not been enabled to introduce into this Bill any system whatever by which a portion of the non-official Members of the Local Councils, at any rate, could be chosen by some system of election or selection, and not left entirely to the system of pure nomination as it now exists. On reading the Despatch which was addressed by the noble Viscount to the present Governor General on the 1st of August last, and which has been laid on your Lordships' Table, I find the following paragraph. After saying that, in the opinion of the noble Viscount, public opinion should be more largely and variously represented, he goes on, not to ask the Government of India for their views as to the best manner in which this should be done, but to express his own opinion most decidedly upon it. He goes on to say—

> "And this may, in my opinion, be best effected by a simple extension of the existing system, such as will by increasing the number of nominations to the Councils extend the circle of selection so as to secure, as far as circumstances admit, due representation of considerable sections of the community, and of administrative knowledge and experience in the principal departments of the various Governments."

Now, my Lords, I have a very high respect for the noble Viscount opposite. I believe he has fulfilled the duties of his important office with great ability, success, and wisdom; but, at the same time, I may venture perhaps to say that instead of the opinions which have been expressed by the noble Viscount I should like to have had the opinion expressed by the Viceroy. I may be wrong; but I should think that the Viceroy and his Council in India are better able—upon matters of this kind a great deal better able—to gauge the political situation in India, and to express to Her Majesty's Government and to the country the wisest manner of dealing with the affairs of India than even the most able Secretary of State. And, my Lords, it is a matter of great regret to me to find that in these Papers we have not been given the opinions which have been expressed by either the late or the present Viceroy upon this subject. I cannot suppose after the expressions used by Lord Dufferin, which I read to your Lordships at the outset of the observations I have to make to the House, that Lord Dufferin is altogether against any system of election as applied to any part of the Legislative Bodies in India; and, indeed, I have seen it broadly stated that Lord Dufferin has expressed an opinion in favour of some such system. But, my Lords, however that may be, I venture to express the hope that it may not be impossible for Her Majesty's Government to re-consider that portion of the Bill, and that they may think it would not be right to shut the door, as would be done by this Bill, to the introduction of some system of selection or election, at any rate, into the subordinate Legislative Councils of India. I have no hesitation in saying that with proper safeguards some system of selection of that kind might be safely carried out. While I say that I am standing at a disadvantage, and the reason why I am standing at a disadvantage in this matter is because we have not before us the opinions of the Government of India upon this matter. If I had those opinions I should speak with much greater confidence. No man can be more convinced than I am of the necessity of dealing most cautiously and tentatively with this great question. I am, as your Lordships will have seen, in favour of no wholesale scheme of popular representation in India, as popular feeling exists in India at the present time; but I cannot disguise from myself that that idea exists in the opinion of some of the most loyal and able men in India, that is to say, an opinion in favour of the introduction of natives, either by selection or election, into the Legislative Councils. I should deprecate laying down in any Act of Parliament which might be passed in this country any plan or scheme of selection or election; for this reason, our knowledge of India is very incomplete in this country. Each Province in India differs one from the other, and I hold that it is impossible to say the same system would answer for all—that the system which would suit Madras would suit Bengal; and certainly it would be impossible to assert that the system which would suit Bengal or Calcutta would suit the North-Western Provinces or the Punjaub. Therefore I say that with our present incomplete knowledge it would be necessary for us to exercise great caution in introducing such a system. I myself would suggest it might be possible to introduce a clause into the Bill, enabling the Viceroy in Council in India to submit some scheme appointing part or the whole of the non-official Members of the Local Councils for the consideration of the Secretary of State for India in Council, and after the approval of the Secretary of State for India in Council was given to some plan of that kind by propogation it might be carried into effect, at any rate, by the Local Councils. I myself should not be disposed at the present time to go further with respect to the Supreme Council than, perhaps, allowing the selection of a Member by each of the subordinate Legislatures. As the Bill proposes increasing the number of Members from six to 12 I cannot see any danger in four or five of them being selected by the Local Legislatures; there would then be an ample margin by allowing the Viceroy to select the number necessary to make up the authorised number to appoint any men whom he might select for the purpose of assisting the business he had in hand. That is my view of the matter, my Lords; and if I find any support to the views which I have expressed, I should attempt to put down on paper those views before the Bill goes into Committee, for the purpose of giving your Lordships the opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the measure, for I am sure it is a measure which will be greeted with great satisfaction in India, but which I think requires that small addition to make it a perfectly satisfactory measure.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, I think that it will probably suit your Lordships' convenience if I confine any observations I have to make at this stage of the Bill to the 1st clause. I therefore will not trouble your Lordships now with anything relating either to the discussion of the Budget or to the question of interpellation. I may have something to say upon those clauses at a later stage, if your Lordships will allow me; but in order not to take up your time more than I have a right to do on the present occasion, I will at this moment confine myself to what is the most important portion of this Bill, in some respects, although perhaps not in others, namely, the proposed change in the organisation of the Council of the Governor General and of the Local Councils. My Lords, upon the first blush of the matter it would seem, I think, that the proposals made by the noble Viscount in this Bill are in this respect of a very limited character; because he proposes to increase the number of the nominated Members in the Governor General's Council to a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 16, there being at present a minimum of six and a maximum of 12; that is to say, he proposes to give power to add four nominated Members to the Governor General's Council, and although his proposal in regard to the Local Councils is somewhat more extensive he proposes there only that the minimum should be eight and the maximum 20; at present under the existing law the minimum is four and the maximum is eight. Therefore, on the first blush of the matter it might seem that those proposals are not of a very extensive or very important character. But I quite agree with my noble Friend who has just sat down, to whose speech I am sure your Lordships listened with the greatest attention and interest, in the opinion which he, I think, expressed, or which he certainly implied, that any dealing with the question of these Legislative Councils in India must be a most important matter, and, as I ventured to suggest to your Lordships on the First Reading of this Bill, a matter of special importance at the present time when this subject is occupying the minds of men to so large an extent. Now, my Lords, with respect to the mode in which any extension of Members in the Governor General's Council or in the Local Councils should be carried out. I agree very much with what fell from my noble Friend the Earl of Northbrook; and I earnestly hope that Her Majesty's Government will give great weight to what he has said and to the appeal which he has made to them to re-consider the frame of this clause, so as to render it possible for the Government of India to introduce into the Local Governments especially, and I would go to the extent of saying the Governor General's Council also, the principle of election or selection, whichever you may call it. Your Lordships may remember that if some such power is not given in this Bill it will require a fresh Act of Parliament before any change of that kind can be introduced even into the Local Councils; and we all know, and I think nobody knows better than the noble Viscount opposite, the difficulty there is in passing an Indian Bill through Parliament. Therefore, I go quite along with my noble Friend in saying that you should make such a Bill as this an empowering Bill; that you should lay down the principle on which these Councils are to be constituted; but that you should leave the details as much as you can to be arranged by the Government and Legislatures of India. I must strongly deprecate Bills being introduced into Parliament here containing very minute regulations in respect of these matters. But looking at the clauses as they stand, while I quite agree in the principle that adding elected Members to these Councils would be desirable, I think it would be undesirable to increase the number of the nominated Members—that is to say, nominated as they are at present. And I am much inclined to think with respect to the Governor General's Council that that is the opinion of the present Government of India; because I find in a Despatch of Lord Lansdowne's and his Colleagues of the 24th December last this passage—

"The majority of us"—

I do not know whether my noble Friend Lord Lansdowne is himself included in that majority or not—

> "Are of opinion that there should be no increase in the number composing the Governor General's Council, and that its enlargement to the extent proposed will have the effect of adding to expenditure without increasing efficiency."

Now, my Lords, I am bound to say that, as far as my own experience goes, I think that if you increase the number of nominated Members to be selected by the Viceroy or by the Governors of Provinces you will be only adding to a difficulty which already exists, and which is experienced in practice. At all events, I can only say that I myself found the duty of selecting those Members a very difficult one. The maximum number was 12. It had been the practice of some Viceroys not to fill up all the places in the Council. I think that was the case sometimes with my noble Friend behind me and with others. I thought it was my duty, as far as I could, to fill up the numbers with Members who should represent various opinions upon the Governor General's Council. I must truly say to your Lordships that I found the difficulty of selecting men who represented the various classes of the community and the various sections of opinion, as well as the various localities of India, one of extreme difficulty. That these nominated Members were intended to be as far as it was possible under a system of nomination of a representative character is, I think, clear from a perusal of the debates and discussions upon the Bill of 1861. There I think you will find it was obviously the intention of my noble Friend, Lord Halifax, who was then at the head of the India Office, and of Parliament that by means of this system of nomination representatives of the different parts of India and of the different sections of the community should be introduced into the Governor General's Council and into the other Councils. At that time there were no other means open to the Government of appointing men to these Councils. You could not have had at that time anything in the nature of a system of election or selection. In 1861 you had scarcely anything in the nature of Municipal Institutions in India. It is one of the many benefits which were conferred upon India by the late Lord Mayo, that he commenced to establish the system of municipal organisation in India. That policy of Lord Mayo's was followed out yet more fully by my noble Friend the Earl of Northbrook, and since then it has taken a yet wider extension. So that at the present time you have in the Municipal Bodies of India, as well as, I think, in certain other Public Bodies which have sprung up since the Act of 1861, the means of securing the selection of fitting men to serve in the Local Councils, at all events, and who would be representatives of the different parts of the country and of different sections of native opinion. The great Education Despatch of Lord Halifax had then borne but little fruit. Now our education is widespread in India, and it is bearing much fruit; and although my noble Friend the Earl of Northbrook spoke of the small number of men who have passed through the highest educational tests in India that number is a growing number, and already you have among those men an ample field for the selection of persons who are well acquainted with the English language (for that is essential, of course, to a Member of these Councils) and fitted to take part in the discussion and in the consideration of the measures which are submitted to the Councils. But, my Lords, with respect to pure nomination, in the first place, as I have said, it is a difficult task for a Viceroy to determine who will represent in the best manner the various parts of the country, or the various interests and classes in the country; and then when he has selected the man who he thinks is most likely to command influence among his fellow-countrymen it not unfrequently happens in India, as it not unfrequently happens in every other country in the world, that the mere fact of the man having been selected by the Government and put into the Council as their nominee seriously interferes with his influence among his fellow-countrymen. Then, again, take another case, the case of re-appointments. As the noble Viscount very well knows, these nominated Members are nominated for two years. At the expiration of the two years they have to be replaced. They have either to be re-nominated or other persons are put into their place. Now, take the case of a Member of one of these Councils who, in the exercise of his functions, has thought it his duty, or has seen fit for some reason, to oppose the measures which have been proposed by the Government. Is he to be re-nominated at the end of his two years by the Governors or Governor General, or is he not? There might be many reasons in such cases which would make it a matter of doubtful propriety for the Viceroy or the Governor General to re-nominate him; and yet, if he is not re-nominated, he instantly poses as a martyr, and he is at once thought by his fellow-countrymen to have been put out of the Council simply because he had been a thorn in the side of the Government, and had opposed their measures. I have had other reasons which have led me to that conclusion, a conclusion which was strengthened during the time that I was in India with regard to the difficulty of making those selections without the aid of some outside body which can choose a certain portion of the members as representatives of native opinion in these Councils. My Lords, it is of great value to the Government of India, that their measures should be criticised in these Councils by men who are face to face with them and to whom they can give a reply upon the spot. One of the great difficulties of the Government of India is the difficulty of making replies to the misrepresentations and misunderstandings which spring up, and which are propagated by the Press, whether native or European, in all directions. The Government of India has not any organ in the Press, and, in my opinion, ought not to have any organ in the Press; but I am not in the smallest degree afraid of any criticism which may be brought to bear upon the Government by the members of the Council who are face to face with it in the Council itself; and I have always been of opinion that such opportunity should be afforded them of defending their policy in Council. That seems to me to be really the difficulty of making a selection of men by the Governor General or by the Governors, and looking to the assistance which it is to the Government in these Councils to have men who will speak freely with regard to their measures, and who will afford them, therefore, an opportunity of defending their policy, I quite agree with my noble Friend behind me in thinking that the time has come when the object of the Act of 1861, namely, the obtaining of a representation of native opinions upon these Councils may be best secured by providing that a portion of their members should be chosen by some such Bodies as the larger Municipal Bodies, or other Public Bodies, to be selected, not as I think by an Act of Parliament, but by an Act of the Indian Legislature. Now, my Lords, of course, as my noble Friend has pointed out, we are discussing this question to-night at some disadvantage, because we have not before us the full opinions of my noble Friend the Marquess of Dufferin with respect to this part of the matter, and neither have we any definite expression of opinion on the part of the present Government of India, because, so far as concerns the Governor General's Council, they do not appear to agree with the proposals of the Bill. The noble Viscount opposite has laid upon your Lordships' Table an extract from the Minute of my noble Friend Lord Dufferin, made on the 6th November, 1888, and as was pointed out by the noble Lord who has previously spoken, Lord Dufferin subsequently to that date, towards the end of November, in a public speech which he made in Calcutta, made known to the public the fact that he had submitted his opinions upon these questions to the Government at home. It is really no use to pretend that we have not reason to believe that the Minute of my noble Friend Lord Dufferin went beyond the extracts which have been given to us in these Papers, and touched upon the very question of the introduction of a representative or elective element into the local Councils. The public has been favoured with a document which purports to give a much larger portion, at all events, of the Minute of my noble Friend. That document, I suppose, got out to the public in some surreptitious and improper manner, which recalls to us the famous incident of Mr. Marvin; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that that document is the public property, illegitimately obtained undoubtedly, but it is before the public; and I do, therefore, venture to think that the noble Viscount would do well while condemning, as he is most justly entitled to condemn, the means by which that document may have been obtained and made public, nevertheless not to follow a course which a little partakes of the fabled policy of the ostrich, and to refuse to put us in possession of the real facts of the case with regard to the Minute of my noble Friend Lord Dufferin. I think that is the fair course to take towards Lord Dufferin, and I certainly think it is the fair course to take towards this House. I do not deny that I am discussing this question in the belief that Lord Dufferin has expressed an opinion which is favourable to the introduction of an electoral element into the Local Councils. That is an opinion of the greatest importance, pointing entirely in the direction in which I myself think it would be wise and judicious to proceed, and giving great support to the views which I myself have been induced to adopt by the consideration which I have been able to give to this question, not now for the first time, with regard to the course which it is desirable to pursue. I go quite along with my noble Friend who has just down in his desire to see the elective or representative element introduced into the Local Councils. I think that if that step is taken it would be desirable to introduce an element very likely in the manner suggested by my noble Friend, namely, by the selection of Members from the Local Council to the Governor General's Council, but to introduce an element of election or selection, if you like to call it so, into the Governor General's Council also. And I will tell your Lordships why. I am not at all surprised that my noble Friend should desire to proceed with great caution in regard to this question; but I think it is most desirable that what you do now in the present state of public feeling upon this subject in India should be of such a kind as to afford a fair ground for expecting that it will have a reasonable degree of permanence. I think nothing would be worse than to do a little now, and then to be pushed to do a little more a few years hence. I do think that if you so far open the door of the Governor General's Legislative Council as to admit into it the infusion of a representative element, you may be able to rest for a reasonable time. Nobody attempts to talk of finality in these matters in reference to any Bill which might be passed now; but if you leave the Governor General's Council altogether out of your purview, and deal only with the case of representatives in the Local Councils, I think you will not in any degree check the demand which is being made for a representative element in the Governor General's Council; and I think you will fail in the object, which I believe to be the object of the noble Viscount opposite, namely, to make such a change in those Councils at the present time as will give fair and reasonable satisfaction to the public desires. My noble Friend who spoke last said he felt this Bill was not at all premature. I entirely agree with him; indeed, I should be inclined to express a regret that some measure of this kind was not introduced at an earlier period. I regret that it was not introduced at the time when my noble Friend, Lord Dufferin, expressed his views upon the subject. I am not wishing to make any sort of attack upon the noble Viscount opposite on this point. Very far, indeed, from it. I admit all the difficulties of passing Bills of this kind through Parliament, and I do not therefore wish to make this in any sense a hostile criticism; but I do think that the sooner this question is dealt with upon a wide and sufficient basis, to form a resting place for a time, the better it will be for all parties, and the more conducive to the safety of our position in India. My Lords, if I might be pardoned in regard to this question of representation and nomination for giving you my own actual experience in respect to it, I would just allude to a fact which took place during the time of the discussion of that Bengal Rent Bill of which my noble Friend spoke. That was a Bill, as your Lordships will recollect, which dealt with very important questions. It dealt with the question of the relations between landlord and tenant in Bengal. It was a very hotly contested Bill, and I was very desirous of obtaining upon the Council an able and trusted representative of the landowning interest. I wish I could have obtained a representative of the ryots' interests; but that, of course, was impossible. The Government had to represent the interests of the ryots, but it was very important for them to obtain a thoroughly trusted representative of the Bengal landowners. What did I do? I thought the best plan was to go to the British India Association and to another Association which represented the landowning interest in Bengal, and to say to them—"If you will recommend me a person in whom you have confidence to represent your views upon the Council, if I think him a fit and proper man for the purpose, I will appoint him." And I did that twice. The gentleman who was first selected resigned, and I applied again to the same Bodies and they made me a second nomination. Both those nominations were accepted. As my noble Friend has said, both these gentlemen represented the views of the landowners of Bengal with the greatest ability, and they were of the greatest service in discussing the Bill in Select Committee. I secured what I wanted, namely, that when they made any compromise and agreed to any arrangement they should do it as the representatives of the landowners; and that they should not be looked upon as Government nominees, whose proceedings could be easily and readily disavowed. My Lords, I advocate the adoption generally of a course of that description, which I am confident was of very great assistance in passing the measure to which I have referred, and I think if my noble Friend, Lord Dufferin, were here to-night he would have agreed with me that the gentleman who represented the landowners in the Council when he became Viceroy was of the greatest assistance to him; and that although he fought his battle gallantly and determinedly he still was of very great assistance in passing the Bill through the Legislature. My Lords, for these reasons I do sincerely hope that the noble Viscount will listen to the suggestions of my noble Friend the Earl of Northbrook, and will consider and somewhat widen and open the clauses of this Bill. If he does not, I shall regret the increase of the number of members if they are all to be nominated. I believe you will only aggravate the difficulties of the present situation; but if he will introduce the measure which has been suggested with regard to the election by constituted Bodies, then I believe the noble Viscount will have done a very desirable thing for the Government of India, that he will have organised these Councils upon a basis which will be calculated to possess a very considerable amount of permanence, and that he will deserve the hearty thanks of all who are interested in the future of our great Indian Dependency.

*VISCOUNT CROSS: My Lords, I have to thank you for the way in which this Bill has been received. When I had the honour of introducing it the other night, certain objections were raised by noble Lords opposite to certain portions of the Bill, and I am very glad to find from the debate to-night, that by the Papers which I have laid upon the Table of your Lordships' House, since the Bill was introduced, I have entirely done away with the objections then raised to certain portions of this measure. About these questions it is unnecessary, therefore, for me to say anything further. I must thank the noble Earl opposite for the speech he has made for several reasons. In the first place, I think it was an admirable speech, and one which I believe will do a great deal of good; and, secondly, it has saved me from stating a number of things which have been much better stated by the noble Earl than I could possibly have stated them. Anyone, I am certain, who has had anything to do with the Government of India knows the necessity of care and caution when you consider the vast interests at stake in that country with which you have to deal. It is unnecessary for me to dilate in your Lordships' House upon the size of India, upon the number of races, or, I may say, nations; upon their differences in creed and in manners and customs, from one end of India to the other. As was well said by the late Sir Henry Maine, in speaking of India, there is no more resemblance between a Punjaubee and a Bengalee, between an Indian of Hindustan and an Indian of Malabar, than there is between an Englishman and a Roumanian, or between a Spaniard and a Swede. But it is not only that there are differences of race and creed, but there are other distinctions, as regards education and other matters. The noble Lord has given the House several sets of statistics, about what may be called the higher education of the people of India; but I think it is necessary to give also statistics with regard to education among the lower classes of natives. We have to deal with 190,000,000 of Hindoos and 50,000,000 of Mahommedans who inhabit India. I believe, as far as the population of British India is concerned, we may take it as being 200,000,000. But the latest information I had from Lord Dufferin was that you can only take about 5 or 6 per cent. of that vast population of 200,000,000 as being able to read or write, and about 1 per cent. of it as being able to speak English; and even of the 10 or 12 millions who may be said to have that moderate amount of education, namely, the capacity to read and write, about three-fourths cannot be said to have really anything more than a rudimentary education. I am in great hopes that all that has been done, and all that is being done at the present moment, will vastly increase the amount of education in that country, and more rapidly than has hitherto been the case. I think there are signs of improvement from one end of India to the other in that direction; but that all shows how careful we must be in dealing with matters of that kind, and that we should not take a step from which it may be difficult to recede promptly should it not answer. This debate has settled three points. In the first place, it has shown that no man in his senses would ever think of having Parliamentary constituencies there such as we have in England. They are absolutely unsuited to the Eastern habits and absolutely unsuited to a country like India. But I go one step further, and I say that my second point is that no one in his senses would ever think of introducing into India in its present state anything like our English Parliamentary Government. That is a matter which you must put aside absolutely and entirely from your view. Just think how entirely different are the conditions of the two countries. What is the meaning of an adverse vote here? It means, according to Parliamentary Government, that the Government has to retire, and that some other Government must take its place. But in India what is there to take the place of the Government? The Government itself cannot change its officers, and that Government is not responsible, except morally, to any Local Authority, but is responsible to the Sovereign and to the Imperial Parliament. That Government must remain paramount, and must continue the paramount power in the country, whatever the votes of the Council may be. Thirdly, I think, that everyone was entirely agreed that there was a vast difference between the Supreme Council and the Local Councils. I thought the doctrine laid down by the noble Earl as regards the Supreme Council was that which was almost universally held, as I believe it to be absolutely true, namely, that it is one of the most dangerous things you can do rashly to touch the Supreme Council of India. But do not think, my Lords, because I say that we must exercise caution, or because I have laid down those main principles which I believe are universally agreed upon, that either myself or the Government to which I have the honour to belong have not the fullest wish to extend the representative elements as far as possible—to throw the Government of India open to the natives themselves, and that we are not glad to avail ourselves of their services in the interests of the country as far as that can be safely done. There is no doubt that the intelligence, knowledge, experience, and ability of a vast number of the natives of India is of great value to the Government of that country, and it would be very difficult to hold the position we do in that country unless we take every advantage of their services whenever we can. But have we not taken steps in that direction? First, we have the Local Councils already largely decentralised; we have decentralised finance; we have increased local responsibility. I, for one, am perfectly prepared to add to that responsibility and to decentralise further as far as we can do so. We have had the municipal legislation of the noble Earl, the Local Board legislation of the noble Marquess. All this shows that we have been willing and ready to avail ourselves of the experience, knowledge, and intelligence of the native men from time to time as far as it can possibly be of service to us. Now I must say that I have taken one or two steps still further in that direction. Acting upon the Report of the Public Service Commission, I have practically thrown open more offices to the natives than were before available to them. By altering the age of the candidates from 19 to 23, I have done a great deal in order to enable the Indian natives to take advantage of that change in the Public Service—I will not call it concession, because I believe it is an act of justice—and to enable them to come over here and compete with their British fellow-subjects as they may be inclined to do. All that shows that the Government are not backward in availing themselves of native assistance where they can safely get it; and I say without hesitation, and the noble Earl and the noble Marquess have I am glad to say said the same thing, that this Bill is taking a longer step in the same direction. We have enlarged the numbers of the several Councils; we have given them the power of interpellating; we have given them the power of discussing the Budget even on those occasions when it is not necessary to introduce legislation for the purpose of the year's finance. All those are steps in the same direction. Now, the only fault that is found with this Bill, as far as I understand, is not with regard to anything which is contained in it, but as to something which has been left out of it; and the sole question, as far as I can gather from this debate, is really whether, as far as the Local Legislatures are concerned, there is to be any system of election, or whether there is not. The Government came to the conclusion that the state of India was not ripe at present for this principle of election. The time, no doubt, will come when the situation will be altered. We have had the Municipal Councils; we have had the Local Boards. There is no doubt that when first established they were, in many cases, comparative failures. The experience which has been gained in later years has shown that they are gradually rising to the responsibility which has been placed upon them, and on many occasions they have done excellent service, and they are very good institutions for the country. But sufficient time has not elapsed in order to enable us to form an accurate judgment as to the good work which, in the long run, they may do. Now, how is this question to be dealt with? The noble Marquess has said it is a very invidious duty for the Viceroy or for the Governors to nominate those Members of the Council. But the noble Earl and the noble Marquess have both avoided a very important point in discussing this question of representation, and that is, where are your constituencies to be found? I have heard no light thrown upon that subject by them, except the statement that there are such things as Municipalities and Local Bodies. But the Municipal Bodies are not chosen for the purpose of interesting themselves in questions which deeply affect the millions of ryots throughout India, but merely for the purpose of dealing with local matters; and I should think they were, probably, the most unfit persons in many cases to represent the mass of the ryots or cultivators from one end of India to the other. Universities are mentioned. Can anyone say the Universities would really represent the whole interests of India? There are no doubt Commercial Bodies, such as the British India Association, and Chambers of Commerce, but they are not Bodies known to the law, and it would be very difficult to give them a legal status for this particular purpose. Now, one word has fallen from my noble Friends which I think we ought to bear in mind. They have spoken of both election and selection. To my mind it is quite clear that the Governors should have this power of selection. The noble Marquess has given an instance of what happened in his own case when he was in India. What he wanted in that case specially was to have the advice of someone who was perfectly well acquainted with all the wants and necessities of the landlord class in dealing with the question of the particular Province which they were dealing with. What did the noble Marquess do? He immediately consulted the British India Association, because he thought they represented the very class whose interests were going to be affected. When he consulted them they selected a man whom they presented to him, and he, having satisfied himself that he was as good a man as he could obtain for the purpose, immediately accepted him and nominated him to the Council. And he says he did that twice, and that in both cases it was done with the most excellent results. In my opinion, that is very much the course that might fairly be pursued under this Bill standing as it is. I have no objection, quite the contrary, that the Viceroy should consult any of those Bodies he chooses; that he should apply, say, to the Municipality of Calcutta or to the Universities, or to the Chambers of Commerce, or to the British India Association, and say to them—"You nominate one or two men to me, and I will appoint them to my Council when I am satisfied that they ought to be there." That is what my noble Friend did. But in those cases, as he says, they came practically as the representatives of the landlords; and so with regard to these representatives, nominated by these Bodies, approved by the Governor or Lieutenant Governor, or Viceroy, as the case might be, there would be a process of selection according to the will of these Bodies, to be followed by nomination on the responsibility of the Viceroy or Governor or Lieutenant Governor. In that way either of these Bodies might render good service to the Government of India—as good service as that which the noble Marquess received from the gentlemen whom he appointed. I do not know whether any of your Lordships happened to see in the *Times* the other day a short notice of this Bill. If so, if I remember rightly, this question was there raised. One of the Indian papers which generally takes rather a liberal view of these matters had said that although there was no representation by election introduced into the Bill yet they were satisfied that probably it might be wise to leave that for the future; but there was a statement made by one gentleman who is very well known in India and very much respected there, and who has been very much interested in all these Congress movements. I mean Sir Madhava Rao. It was stated in the *Times*, and I have every reason to believe it to be true, that he wrote in this way to Madras—

> "I do not much care about the non-concession of popular election, because careful observation and experience convince me that popular election at present would have ensured the failure of the extended Councils, whereas nomination would probably be their success."

And as you have to make a fresh start in regard to the right of interpellation it is of the highest possible importance, when you are increasing the numbers of natives to be introduced into the Councils, that they should be carefully selected for the purpose of assisting the Government in carrying out this new plan, and not for the purpose of thwarting it, or bringing forward crotchets of their own. I think in the few words which I have said, I have exactly stated the position. I think that it is wiser and safer to leave the power of nomination to the Viceroy, Governor, or Lieutenant Governor; and that, as in the case of the Act of 1861, a Despatch from the Secretary of State should accompany the Act, advising the Viceroy with regard to selecting the persons so to be added to the Councils that they should consult such Bodies as they might think best in their own minds and such as might be suggested to them for nomination; but that they should be nominated to the Council by the Viceroy, or Governor, or Lieutenant Governor on their responsibility, although it would be practically by the Bodies who might be consulted. I think that it would be much safer that we should act in that way than in any other, and that you should let the Bill stand as it is, remembering that in the proposed Despatch it would be pointed out distinctly to the Viceroy that he might get all the assistance he could from the highly-educated, commercial, agricultural, and other classes, and that in regard to persons who were recommended by the Bodies to whom he had applied, he should exercise his own discretion and nominate them, if he thought fit, on his own responsibility.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, first of all, I wish to assure the noble Viscount that in anything I say I do not intend in the slightest degree to speak in a hostile manner of his view. I look upon the Bill not as a long step, as he has called it, because I think a long step would scarcely be wise as regards the affairs of India, but as a substantial step in some respects, and I will certainly welcome the Bill: I will presently say something on the subject of the Councils, but there is in the Bill one very important change, indeed, apart from the question of Councils, and that is a right of interpellation. To give the right of interpellation, I believe, is the right thing to do; but, at the same time, I would not have your Lordships imagine, and I am sure those who are acquainted with India will not imagine, that it is a slight matter. The giving of a right of interpellation must be, as the noble Viscount has said, very carefully guarded. It must be obvious to anyone who knows the Parliamentary system that the right of interpellation may be made the means of harassing a Government, and unless the Government retains, as it will by this Bill, the full power of declining to answer where it thinks that to answer would be prejudicial to the public interests, I think the granting of the right of interpellation might lead to dangerous consequences, but, having said that, I must say that I think the time has come —and I think that is the opinion of most men who are experienced in regard to Indian affairs—when it is desirable to give the right; but in giving that right we must weigh the reasons against it, and I think the reasons in favour of conferring the right outweigh the reasons against it. The Government is perfectly helpless, as things exist, in regard to meeting the constant attacks which are made upon it. You have a free Press, which is not careful or sparing in its denunciations of the Government, and you have statements made, very often erroneous in fact, as well as poisonous and malicious in intention, and though, as it seems to me, there may be some danger accompanying the giving of this power, the reasons for giving it outweigh the danger, and it will be for the convenience of the Government in the long run that it should be given. I will only make one remark for the purpose of the noble Viscount considering it. It has occurred to me that some great crisis might occur in the affairs of India, though I hope there is no occasion to fear anything of the sort; but, of course, many things may occur in so vast a country, when the right of interpellation ought to be entirely suspended; and it seems to me to be worthy of consideration whether the Governor General should not on this subject possess the same power as he possesses on every other subject, namely, that he should be able, on his own responsibility. to suspend altogether the right of interpellation. That is obviously a different matter altogether from objecting to answer questions which may be addressed, because particular questions may be in themselves a source of objection and annoyance, and it would be only for the purpose of giving the Governor that necessary power which, in the case of autocratic Governments, must be lodged somewhere. With regard to the discussion of the Budget, I think no one of experience contends that that ought not to be conceded. But to allow Motions upon the Budget when there is no Bill before the Legislative Council, would be most disastrous and would lead to discussions without aim or objects. It would be quite contrary to our own practice that Members should be at liberty to make all kinds of proposals. It is desirable, on the other hand, that there should be some opportunity of expressing opinions upon the Budget of the year, even though no legislative measure is to be passed. Then with regard to the other matter alluded to by my noble Friend the Earl of Northbrook, as well as my noble Friend behind me, I mean the constitution for the future of the Legislative Council. I am far from not admitting that this is a matter of great delicacy, and on which there may be great differences of opinion as to whether the time has come or not for going beyond the nomination system. I agree with my noble Friend behind me that it is unfortunate, though I do not throw the least blame on the noble Viscount in that respect, that this matter was not dealt with two or three years ago. As my noble Friend reminded the House, an inquiry was suggested at one time which would have directed itself to this point, and the result of that inquiry would no doubt have been some legislation. But that inquiry did not take place, and I think it is to be regretted that an opportunity has been given for a good deal of agitation in India upon the subject which would not have arisen if the matter had been dealt with earlier. But before I go to the particular provisions of this Bill, I should like to clear myself entirely from any possible imputation on the question of Parliamentary representation. I quite concede that it is entirely chimerical to entertain the notion that you can have a Parliamentary system in India. That it would be inconsistent with the whole system of our Government in that country, and not merely inconsistent with our system of government in that country, but inconsistent with the condition of the populations of India, the state of their civilisation, and the whole of the circumstances of the country. I cannot pretend to a tithe of the knowledge of India which many noble Lords in this House possess; but the slightest knowledge of that country will, I think, convince anyone that the notion of a Parliamentary representation of so vast a country—almost as large as Europe—containing so large a number of different races is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men. But while I say this, I am not at all inclined to disregard the progress which has been made in that country, or the efforts which have been made by the Congresses held in that country, though I do not know that they have been on all occasions marked by wisdom and statesmanship; still I believe that the native gentlemen who have taken part in these Congresses have done so with good motives and with loyal intentions, and I think we may legitimately consider and give every weight to the opinions they have expressed. At the same time, it would be a matter of regret, as the noble Earl (Northbrook) has said, that we should not take this opportunity of taking a little longer step than the noble Viscount has taken, and that longer step is to introduce some elective elements into the Legislative Councils. The noble Viscount asks, How is that to be done? I agree with my noble Friend behind me that no one in this country is really competent to carry out a scheme in detail for establishing a system of election in India, and I should not venture even to express an opinion in favour of it if I did not know that men far more competent than I am have, after full consideration of the matter, come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when that should be done. My noble Friend alluded to Lord Dufferin's opinion upon this subject. I am sorry to be obliged to repeat what he said, but it is no use to blink the matter. The opinions of Lord Dufferin are known to all the world. I smypathise entirely wthi the feeling on the other side of the House at those views having become known by a scandalous divulgence of public correspondence. The Minute which is now published I now know, which I did not know before, must be an authentic Minute, because there is an extract in the Papers which have been laid before the House agreeing with it word for word. Now, in that Minute which has been no doubt stolen and published, we have the opinions of Lord Dufferin, which, as I have said before are known to all the world, in favour of election to the Legislative Councils; and however much I regret—and I cannot condemn too strongly the manner in which those opinions have been made known—we cannot divest ourselves of that knowledge which we possess. But if we had not that knowledge—improperly acquired as it has been—not by me, but by those who have published it, we should have the right to strongly press the Government to give us the opinions of Lord Dufferin. Lord Dufferin was the last Viceroy, and he could, therefore, form an opinion worth knowing on the subject. Lord Lansdowne, I am sure, would be the first to admit that he has not had sufficient time in India to be able to mature an opinion which can be possibly entitled to the same respect as that of the Viceroy, who gave his opinion after nearly the whole of his term of office had expired, and after he had had ample time to satisfy himself on any subject which he might have considered. I again say, my Lords, I do not at all wish to make this Bill the subject of attack; but I think it is scarcely fair to Parliament that we should have to legislate upon such an important matter as this without having in our hands the opinion of Lord Dufferin, who has had so recent and full an experience of the affairs and Government of India. I again press upon the Government that, it being known to all the world what the opinion of Lord Dufferin is, it is perfectly in vain to attempt to exclude that opinion from any discussion of the subject My noble Friend, Lord Dufferin, who is an experienced man of affairs, must have practically considered the matter, and must have brought himself to the opinion, after consideration, that there were means in India by which the selection could have been carried out. We know him too well to suppose that he would have promulgated the opinion without the fullest consideration. He so plainly alludes to it, both in his Jubilee speech and in his speech on St. Andrew's Day, as to make it certain that he would not have spoken as he did unless he had made up his mind that this was not a mere academical opinion, but was a measure which could be practically carried into effect. I should like to know what his practical suggestions were. If I had been Secretary of State I should have asked him what were the suggestions he had to make and for the details of his plan and for some notion of what he thought was best to be done. But my noble Friend, and as I thought most wisely, has abstained from going into details on this subject, and I agree with him that we should only pass an enabling Bill. If you are of opinion that election in any shape should be introduced, you should enable the Governor General in Council to frame a measure to be sent home to be approved by the Government here if they think fit. There can be nothing more disastrous in the future than to attempt to pass Bills in this country, laying down details with regard to the government of such a country as India, and there is not merely the difficulty in passing such Bills, but the difficulty of amending them. Just imagine: We might, after passing a Bill, which we hope and believe would work well—it might be, on the whole, a sound and healthy measure—we might find, as almost always happens, that there were some defects in it requiring amendment. But if that were so, they could only be amended by another Act of Parliament, and I think any of us who have been engaged in politics in this country know that, however great the necessity for passing an Act may be, it is very difficult to get it passed, and although the Government might command a majority, there are very often persons who will for a hundred reasons prevent that Bill even being discussed. Consider the difficulty of the position you would be in if, after passing an Act of Parliament laying down details for the government of India, you found yourselves practically unable to get an amending Bill passed through the House of Commons. It ought to be a maxim with regard to all our legislation in reference to India to avoid detail legislation and to trust to the wisdom of the Viceroy in Council, subject to the approval of the Government at home to deal with details. I should have thought it was possible, my Lords, to frame some measure for allowing either Municipalities or Public Bodies to elect or to send up two or three names out of which the Governor. General might select such a man as he desired. The noble Viscount says the Viceroy might practically do the same thing as my noble Friend (Lord Ripon) successfully did himself in the two instances which he mentioned. I would reply to him that you have in India as everywhere else to consider not merely the thing which is to be done itself, but the mode in which it is to be done. You have to satisfy men's minds. All these questions are brought forward by a comparatively small body, but at the same time it is a body of importance. You have created educated natives, and their influence will tend to increase, and they will hold opinions which though they may not find utterance still exist in the minds of a great many more people than appears on the surface. Looking at the state of the world at present I need not ask any practical man whether these demands will not increase. I think they will increase, and they will have to be taken some notice of. My feeling is this: that if you can safely—and upon this the whole matter turns—take some step in the direction of giving a representative element to these Councils, it will be a wise thing to do. The noble Viscount says aye; but are these representatives that you are going to obtain likely in any way to be the representatives of the great mass of the ryots, and of the masses of the population in India? My Lords, no one that you can put upon these Legislative Councils can possibly represent the ryots of India. Upon the discussion on that Bill which my noble Friend referred to, the Bengal Rent Bill, a Bill of immense magnitude and difficulty, the passing of which reflected the greatest credit upon Lord Dufferin, the only representative of the ryots was the Government. Anyone who knows the circumstances of Bengal must be aware that there are no possible means by which anyone could have been found who would represent the ryots, and for a long time that must continue to be the case. But that does not entail that there are not Bodies in India whose opinions it would be desirable to have. For example, there is a most important body which you would have to deal with, the Mahometans of India. If you were to be guided entirely by the Hindoo popular opinion you would find yourself in great difficulty. But, I say, if you can from different Bodies obtain assistance in your legislation, based upon the selections of those Bodies themselves, you will strengthen yourself more than if you merely nominated even the same persons, because in the one case those persons would be respected as representatives to a considerable extent of important Public Bodies, and in the other case they would be looked upon as only nominees of the Government itself. I believe upon that point turns the whole controversy. If the Government were able to go as far as my noble Friend suggests, I think it would be a very fortunate circumstance. I think so, especially for the reason which my noble Friend the Marquess of Ripon mentioned; for I am extremely afraid of any Bill which will give a reasonable pretence for further agitation and demands at an early date. We require rest in these matters; you cannot always be tinkering at legislation, and you ought to be able to reply to any such demands that the matter has been dealt with, and that you must stand where you are. I cannot but fear that this Bill may, by not satisfying legitimate aspirations in India, fail to bring about that settlement for some reasonable time which all of us desire. I have not made these observations, my Lords, in the slightest in the spirit of hostility or of finding fault; but having myself filled at one time the office which the noble Viscount holds, I thought I might express my agreement in the main with my noble Friends behind me. But I go a little further on one point. I think it would scarcely be safe not to give some representation in the Supreme Council, if the principle of election is to be adopted; because if once you have given elected Members to the Local Councils I think that it would not be possible for any length of time to refuse election to the Supreme Council. In some way I should think it would be necessary to introduce the representative element there also, and that in the Supreme Council there should be the same opportunity of expressing opinions as is given in the subordinate Legislatures. My Lords, as far as the Second Reading of the Bill is concerned I most heartily support it.

*THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): The noble Lord who has just sat down invites us to consider the general course of events, and to infer from that, what is a perfectly legitimate inference, that we should not see the end of this question, but that whatever we did now the matter would be raised again and again. I quite join with them in that view; but it does not appear to me that he and those noble Lords who spoke before him estimate at its right value the intense gravity of the question they have raised. They did not seem to me to recognise how deep a responsibility must lie upon any Government, or upon any Parliament, which introduces the elective principle as an effective agent in the Government of India. It may be—I do not desire to question it—that that is to be the ultimate destiny of India; but the begining of that new principle is one of the gravest parting of the ways which it is possible for any Government to have to face. The principle of election or Government by representation is not an Eastern idea; it does not fit Eastern traditions or Eastern minds. We have seen some efforts to introduce it on that fringe of Oriental population with which we have some acquaintance in Europe. We know that an effort has been made to introduce it into Turkey, and I believe into Egypt, without having produced any palpable result whatever. An effort has been made also to introduce it into Crete, and there I fear it cannot be said to have been a medium for producing peace and good Government in that country. The difficulty of introducing the elective principle, largely dependent upon the peculiarities of Eastern minds, is also to a great extent, as the noble Lord pointed out due to the fact that we have to deal with a deeply divided population. Representative Government answers admirably so long as all those who are represented desire much the same thing, and have interests tolerably analagous; but it is put to an intolerable strain when it rests upon a community divided into two sections, one of which is bitterly hostile to the other, and desirous of opposing it upon all occasions. We do not know how the Mahommedan and Hindoo populations if placed face to face with each other in elective representative Government would view each other; but we know, at all events, that one of the heaviest responsibilities and severest duties of the Government of India is to prevent the outbreak of hostilities caused by the profound differences between those two communities —differences in race traditions, history, and creed. These are some among the difficulties; and there is another difficulty which was not taken notice of by the noble Lord opposite in very clear language, but which was pointedly referred to by my noble Friend the Secretary o fState for India, and that is that if you want to have the elective principle of Government, the first thing you have to find before you advance a single step upon your journey is a constituency; and a constituency is that which we are at present entirely without. We have been offered as a constituency for the representation of the warlike races of the Punjaub the aristocratic people of Rajpootana, and for the vast population of the ryots, spread over the whole of India, a body elected only for the purpose of making streets and taking care of drains. I do not think, without casting the least imputation or slur upon their patriotism or their capacity, that these urban representatives are either by their education or preparation, or the life they have passed through, fitted for the function of forming a constituency fitted to represent those vast interests which we have undertaken to represent. All I wish to say is this: that you must make up your mind upon the constituency that is to surmount the tremendous difficulties which the elective principle must have to contend with wherever it became an efficient force in India. You must make up your mind upon that constituency before you attempt to give legislative sanction to that principle. What appeared to me to be most alarming in the reasoning of the noble Lords opposite was that they think they can stumble and slip into this great change and that no harm would come to them if they had not taken count beforehand where their steps were to be placed or in what direction their journey was to be taken. You must not drift into an elective Government of India You must make up your mind how you are to frame your constituencies, how those vast interests are to be represented before you consign yourselves to the care, charge, and government of the most powerful principle that affects political communities. Do not imagine that you can introduce it in small doses, and that it will be satisfied by that concession. At least, we know this of the elective principle from our experience in Europe, that wherever it has made for itself a small channel it has been able to widen and widen gradually, until all has been carried before it, and that is the danger of any action you may take in India. I hope we shall not imagine that when once we have consigned ourselves to this principle we can retrace our steps or take away the powers that we have given, or that we can undo the result of any mistake we may make. I therefore earnestly urge upon the House not to make so great a change without the most careful and circumspect examination of all the difficulties and dangers which surround it, not to slip into this great innovation, as it were, accidentally. But if we are to do it, if it has to be done, let us do it systematically, counting the cost, examining all the details, and taking care that the machinery to be provided shall effect the purpose of giving representation not to accidentally constituted Bodies, not to small sections of the people here and there, but to the living strength and vital forces of the whole community of India.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, it is impossible not to remark how very much more strongly the noble Marquess has met the objections which have been stated upon this side of the House than has been done by the noble Secretary of State for the India Department. Really the speech of the noble Marquess put an absolute stop to any such suggestion as has been made. I think that argument has been put a little too high in this sense; it would be really supposed by the suggestion made by the noble Earl behind me, and which was supported by the noble Marquess, who, of course, was speaking with immense weight and authority upon this particular subject was as far as this House is concerned, that the House should amend the Bill and send out a complete cut-and-dried Parliamentary Constitution to India upon this occasion. But against that my noble Friend the Earl of Northbrook specially guarded himself, and he pointed out that we were not in a position to judge how anything of this kind was to be carried out, but that it was desirable to give the Viceroy or the Governor or Lieutenant Governor more power than he now possesses in order to carry out any such matters. It appears to me that the noble Marquess in his speech has dealt with the matter with great authority and weight. In regard to the opinion of Lord Dufferin, I think we are taking a very great responsibility upon ourselves; and I certainly do claim what the noble Viscount has not alluded to, that we are entitled to have before us all the Papers on this subject. To that there seems really no reason to object.

***LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY**: My Lords, I desire to concur in the regrets which have been expressed on this side of the House upon the subject of omission in the Bill of selection or election of the new members of the Councils. The object in view is not so much representation as the independence of persons who might hold places in the Legislative Councils, and who are put there as nominees. Another objection that the Bill is too permissive has been removed by the speeches of my noble Friends the Marquess of Ripon and the Earl of Kimberley. As my noble Friends have said, the fact of the Bill being permissive will aid its passing through Parliament; and if there were anything in the Bill which at a future time might require alteration, it could only be amended by Act of Parliament. My noble Friend the former Viceroy referred to the Municipalities and to the progress which they have made. Lord Reay stated last month at Poona that in 1884-5 the elective principle was in operation in 24 Municipalities only. At the end of last year it had been extended to 120 Municipalities with 896 Commissioners. So that in Bombay there would be these Bodies to be consulted. Clause 4 says that the proportion between official and non-official members under the Indian Councils Act of 1861 is to be the same as before; so that the number of new official members will be very small. My Lords, if this Bill goes out to India as it is now, it will be a great disappointment to the Indian public. Some persons will not allow that there is an Indian people. The noble Viscount said that there was no real people of India, but only a collection of races of various languages, religions, manners, and customs; but there is no nation of Europe which is not so composed, even in the United Kingdom. And as Voltaire said of England, "It is a country of a hundred religions, and but one sauce," and the people of India also have one sauce, which prevails from one end of the country to the other; that is—curry. The Government will deceive itself if it does not recognise the great progress in India in regard to unity. It is becoming one through the spread of the English language, through the Penal Code, and through the railways; and Mr. Gladstone has said that he desired the amalgamation of the armies of India because it would promote unity in the same way as occurred in Italy from sending the troops from one end of the country to the other." Now, my Lords, with regard to the Parliamentary Papers, and the right of Members of the Councils to put questions, I must protest against the Secretary of State for allowing the Indian Government to corrupt the Queen's English by the use of the word "interpellation." What is meant by that word? It is used as meaning "interrogation," but it means nothing of the kind. Reference to dictionaries will show that in Latin and English it means interruption of a speaker: in French it is a phrase of legal procedure. During Louis Philippe's reign it was a constant habit of French Deputies to jump up and interrupt Ministers; and then it got to be applied in France to anything addressed to a Minister. The first time I heard the word used in this House was by the late Lord Clarendon. The noble Viscount might ask me, why I did not then object to it? It was because I had been promoted by the late Lord Clarendon when he was Foreign Secretary, and I stood in the position towards him of nominee, and therefore, I naturally shrank from finding fault with his language. I cannot help feeling what an entire absence of independence, therefore, there would be on the part of nominees if put into the Councils. With regard to the right of putting questions, I think that is most important for this reason: that every one of the acts of injustice and maladministration that I have had to complain of in this House have originated with the inferior class of Civil servants. They have gone on being supported by those above them until the Governor General has been to some extent pledged to support them. If those matters could have been brought before the Council those acts of maladministration or injustice might have been stopped. I need not mention old grievances, but will refer to an instance that is going on at this moment. As your Lordships may be aware, the demolition of a Hindoo Temple has been ordered, and the order has been carried out. No doubt, Sir Stewart Bailey will inquire into the matter; but if there had been a possibility of putting a question to the Lieutenant Governor upon it, such an abuse of power might not have taken place. My Lords, I shall put an Amendment on the Paper with regard to placing a limit upon the right of putting questions, and I hope the noble Viscount will be able to accept it.

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, March 6, 1890.

THE ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War which of the recommendations of the Committee on the Army Medical Department will involve a largely increased expenditure?

***Mr. E. STANHOPE**: Considerable increase of charge is involved in each of the following recommendations: That the 50 brigade surgeons should be the 50 senior surgeons-major (or surgeons-lieutenant-colonel, as they are called in the Report); that medical officers on the Active List should be substituted for the retired officers employed at home: that medical officers should be attached for a definite period to regiments and corps; that the tour of foreign service should be decreased; that three months' special leave should be given every seven years; that service shall date from entry at Netley; that higher pay should be given in India to certain ranks.

Monday, March 10, 1890.

OCCUPATION OF ZEYLAH, BULHAR, AND BERBERA.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India on whose account, at whose expense, and on what title Zeylah, Bulhar, and Berbera are occupied by British troops; whether the natives, who are represented as raiders, have ever recognised the British occupation, or have openly resisted it; whether the late expedition was ordered to carry on a war of punishment by the destruction of wells and private property; and, if so, whether those orders were given by the Indian or the British Authorities.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The circumstances and conditions under which the Somali Coast was occupied by British troops will be found in detail in Parliamentary Return, Egypt, 14th, of 1885. In reply to the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question, the natives have recognised the British occupation, though that had nothing to do with the expedition. Bulhar, on which the raid was made, is not in their territory. In answer to the last paragraph of the question I may say that the expedition was punitive. It was ordered by the Government of India. No instructions for the destruction of wells and private property were given.

SIR G. CAMPBELL : Then am I to understand the right hon. Gentleman to tell us that where the destruction of property occurred the expense will be paid by the Government ?

SIR J. GORST : I have no information that any private property was destroyed. If the hon. Gentleman believes that there was he had better give notice of a further question.

Tuesday, March 11, 1890.

ALLEGED RIOTING AT ROHTAK.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to the circumstances under which the police, in September last, fired upon the Hindu population at Rohtak, when one Hindu was killed and 12 other Hindus were severely wounded; and especially whether the police officer giving the order to fire has been called upon for, and has given, any explanation of his reason for firing ; and whether the Secretary of State will call for a full Report of the whole facts, including the origin of certain alleged rioting arising out of the desecration of Hindu Temple Cars, in August and September last ; the arrest, and summary trial, of a large number of persons ; the conviction and imprisonment, by order of Major Renwick, Deputy Commissioner, of 35 of the accused, and the subsequent reversal of such conviction by the Court of Appeal, and the liberation of the imprisoned men ?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham) : The question of the hon. Member has already been sent to India, and on the receipt of a reply to his various queries the Secretary of State will communicate the result to him. All such riots as those at Rohtak are invariably inquired into by the Local Governments as a matter of course.

TYPHOID FEVER AMONG THE TROOPS IN INDIA.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether typhoid fever has been very prevalent amongst officers and men of the British troops in India during the years 1887, 1888, and 1889 ; whether he can state the number of deaths for each of those years ; whether the deaths have been most numerous amongst the young soldiers ; and whether any steps are being taken to stop the ravages of this preventable disease ?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle) : Typhoid or enteric fever has been very prevalent in India during the last three years, and was specially fatal last year. The deaths from this disease were 247 in the year 1887 ; 267 in the year 1888 ; and 429 last year, as to which year however, the figures must be regarded as appropriate only. The deaths have been most numerous among young soldiers. All possible precautions are taken to prevent the insanitary conditions which are believed to induce the disease. Cantonments and barracks in the neighbouring towns and bazaars are strictly supervised, and the purity of the water, milk, and food generally is secured by all means practicable. During the last year a Special Commission investigated the sanitary state of Lucknow and Meerut with particular reference to enteric fever. The liability of young soldiers to this disease is a principal reason for not allowing men under 20 years of age to proceed to India.

COLONIAL AND INDIAN POSTAL CHARGES.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) : I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether any representations have been made by either Colonial or Indian Governments, expressing a desire for a reduction of the postal charges to those Colonies ; whether he is aware if it is a fact that the postal services of the colonies now result in heavy losses to them; and, whether it is competent for the Government to reduce the ocean postal charge to one penny per letter without retiring from the Postal Union, and thus destroying existing postal arrangements with other countries?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): In answer to the hon. Member I may say that no representations have been made to me, either by Colonial or Indian Governments, expressing a desire for a reduction of the postal charges to the Colonies or to India. I am informed that the postal services of the Australian Colonies now result in heavy losses to them, amounting last year to not less than £380,000, and in the case of Canada I see from a recent Report of the Dominion Postmaster General that there is a loss on postal services of over 700,000 dollars, or more than £150,000 a year. Although the question has not yet been definitely decided there is great reason to doubt if it would be competent for this country to reduce its ocean postal charge to its colonies to one penny per letter without withdrawing from the Postal Union and thus destroying all the existing postal arrangements with other civilised countries.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY CONFERENCE.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E. Heywood): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he is aware that there is a widespread and increasing public opinion in favour of the Motion in my name which stands as the first on the Paper to-day. There have been a large umber of petitions presented in favour of it, and I wish to know from the right hon. Gentleman if he does not think it right to meet that public opinion which has found expression in public meetings, and by the action of Chambers of Commerce, by giving an early day for the discussion of the question; whether the evils which have resulted from the divergence in the relative volumeof silver and gold following the monetary changes which took place in 1873 cannot best be dealt with by a conference to consider whether a Bi-metallic system cannot be established by International agreement in the interest of all the nations concerned?

SIR W. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that some 70 or 80 petitions have already been presented to the House in favour of this Resolution, and that there is a widespread desire among the commercial and agricultural interests in favour of the discussion of the subject?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I have not followed the petitions which have been presented to the House, but I have no doubt that a great many petitions have been received. But I am aware that there is an organisation which affords facilities to hon. Members and others interested in the question for representing their views to the House. In answer to the question of the hon. Member opposite I trust, seeing that the Session is still young, that he will avail himself of the opportunities which will be afforded to him by the Ballot for securing a day for the consideration of the subject. Unfortunately I am not in a position to afford it any portion of the small amount of time devoted to the business of the Government. I am sure that if I were to do so I should only accumulate on myself claims that it would be utterly impossible for me or the House to entertain. I do not think that the cause which the hon. Gentleman advocates will suffer from the slight delay which is now imperatively imposed.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, March 13, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.—(No. 28)

COMMITTEE.

Moved, "That the Bill be now considered in Committee."

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, there is a matter to which I desire to call the attention of the noble Viscount opposite in going into Committee on this Bill, because it appears to me to be a matter of very considerable importance, and one which will interfere with the object of the legislation with which the noble Viscount is now concerned, the design of which is to improve the condition of the Provincial Councils in India and to give them further activity and vitality. It will, I think, very much interfere with that end and object unless it receives the attention of your Lordships' House. It will be observed that in the Bill, as originally drafted, and which received the approval of the Government of India, there was a provision contained in the 3rd clause of the Bill that the Local Legislature of any Province in India might, by Acts passed under and subject to the provisions of the Indian Councils Act of 1861, repeal or amend as to that Province any legislation made with regard to that Province, prior to the passing of the Act or to the formation of any Councils subsequently established. In order to explain the point, I should like to call attention to the provisions contained in the Indian Councils Act of 1861. That Act deals with the Councils. Let me take the Council of Bombay as an illustration. It enabled the Council of Bombay to act in regard to what I may call local legislation, but it provided that it was not by its legislation in any way to repeal or amend or interfere with any law passed by the Council of the Governor General subsequent to the Indian Councils Act of 1861—the object, of course, being that the Local Legislature should not interfere with subsequent legislation of the Governor General in Council dealing with matters with which it thought fit to deal, notwithstanding the existence of the Provincial Council; but it left the Provincial Council free to deal with all the legislation prior to 1861, and of course with all legislation on matters which were in no way dealt with for Bombay by the subsequent action of the Governor General in Council. It enabled other Provincial Councils to be formed, but they could only be formed subject to the same conditions as to legislation as were applicable to Bombay. The consequence was that any Provincial Councils formed, however many years afterwards, could not deal with any subject of legislation practically between 1861 and the time it was formed, which had been dealt with for that Province by the Governor General in Council. Before that time there had been comparatively little legislation of that kind, and, therefore, to preclude a Council formed in 1861 or about that time from dealing with any legislation subsequent to 1861 was to limit their legislation to a very small area. But after 1861 there was a great deal of legislation necessary by the Governor General in Council affecting other parts of India, affecting them as to purely local details, as to which the Government had never before thought fit to interfere. Therefore, when the Local Council was constituted for the North West Provinces it was in this position: that it could not deal with any subject of legislation that had been dealt with in any way whatever, so that purely local matters which had been dealt with by the Governor General in Council between 1861 and, say, 1880, could not be dealt with by the Provincial Council. For example, if the Governor General in Council had dealt with such matters as the straying of cattle, or trespassing of cattle, which are of course purely local concerns, then because they had been dealt with in some way by the Governor General before the North-West Provinces Council was constituted, the North West Provinces Council was powerless to deal with them. The consequence is, that though the North-West Provinces Council has been created, its hands are tied, and it is prevented from dealing with a vast range of purely local subjects which the other Councils, such as the Council of Bombay, have been dealing with for years. If there is a Council constituted for the Punjaub, which will probably soon be the case, that will be subject to the same fetters. The consequence is, that there will be little advantage gained by increasing the importance or strengthening the powers of the Provincial Councils if you only strengthen them in importance, but leave them in such a position that they are prevented from dealing with a vast range of purely local matters, which it is in the highest degree expedient the Councils should be induced to take up as much as possible. To meet that difficulty the 3rd clause was introduced into the draft Bill which is before your Lordships' House, and it was approved by the Governor General in Council. I need not read it ; but that clause practically gets rid of the difficulty to which I have called your attention, and enables these Councils, notwithstanding the prior legislation before they were constituted by the Governor General in Council, to deal with these important local matters. I do not know why this clause has dropped out of the Bill, but I desire to call your Lordships' attention to it because it is really of little use to strengthen these Provincial Councils, as I hold it is in the highest degree necessary to strengthen them, and which will lead to most valuable work being done in India, if their hands are tied so that they cannot deal with these important subjects of every-day interest, and regarding purely local concerns, which it is necessary for them to deal with and legislate upon. I hope, therefore, that we shall have some explanation from the noble Viscount as to why this clause has been omitted.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): My Lords, what has fallen from the noble and learned Lord opposite is perfectly true. This clause was in the original Bill, and had received practically the sanction of the Government of India. It was only left out in order to lighten the Bill, which we are anxious your Lordships' House should pass. Thinking, however, that it would be wise not to leave that point alone, I have been in consultation with some of those who are most intimately acquainted with the North-Western Provinces, and I am prepared, if it should be considered necessary for this clause to be inserted, to at once assent to that re-insertion. But I am further strengthened in that opinion by the consideration that the more one looks into the matter the more one is convinced that the extension of these Councils will be a great advantage to India. I am in correspondence privately with the Viceroy as to whether it would not be well in other parts of India to set up Councils like these in order, as far as possible, to bring about decentralisation. If, therefore, in Committee the noble Earl will move the re-insertion of that clause in the Bill, I shall at once assent to it.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I am exceedingly glad that my noble and learned Friend has called attention to this matter. I am sorry I overlooked it, because the point was raised at the time I was at the India Office, and extreme inconvenience was experienced by the absence of such a clause as this which has been left out of the Bill. I believe it would be a great practical remedy for that inconvenience. I have heard with great pleasure the opinion which the noble Viscount has expressed that it is desirable to extend the Councils to other parts of India. At the time I was in the India Office it was determined to extend the system of Councils to the North-Western Provinces, and I certainly from what I heard at that time, speaking from my own examination of the subject, am fully persuaded that from time to time as the Provinces are found to be in a fit condition to receive Councils, they should be extended to those Provinces.

On Question, agreed to.

House in Committee (according to order).

Clause 1.

*THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK: It will be perhaps in the recollection of your Lordships that on the Second Reading of this Bill my noble Friends the Marquess of Ripon and the Earl of Kimberley and I myself expressed our cordial support of the Bill, but our desire that the door should not be shut to some system of election or selection in respect of the nomination of members, certainly of the Local Legislatures and possibly also of the Supreme Legislature. My Lords, in expressing that opinion we took care, and my noble Friends will correct me if I am not giving an accurate account of their views as well as my own, to express our opinion that India was at the present time entirely unsuited to the introduction of any general system of popular representation. In the discussion my noble Friend the Marquess of Ripon gave an illustration of the manner in which, when he was Viceroy, he made one of two appointments to the Legislative Council of the Viceroy; that is to say, by requesting a Public Body of some importance in Calcutta to recommend a gentleman for appointment as a member of that Council, in view of a very important project of law which was then being discussed. In reply to our observations, the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India referred to that illustration, and expressed his opinion that some such practice as that was likely to be carried out under the Bill, and he said it might be very desirable that Public Bodies of different kinds in India should make recommendations to the Viceroy and to the heads of Local Governments for appointments to the different Legislative Councils, the Viceroy and the heads of the Local Governments nominating, if they thought fit, the persons so recommended to them. I think the noble Viscount added that he believed that could be done under the provisions of the Bill. I was a little doubtful whether that suggestion could be carried out without possibly a legal difficulty arising, unless an extension were made of the words contained in the Bill; and for the purpose of making that quite clear I venture to propose the Amendment which I have placed upon your Lordships' Table, namely, to insert the following words at the end of Clause 1:—

> "Provided that the Governor General in Council may from time to time, with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council make regulations as to the conditions under which such nominations or any of them shall be made by the Governor General, Governors, and Lieutenant Governors respectively, and prescribe the manner in which such regulations should be carried into effect."

I apprehend those words will make it quite clear that some such system as was indicated by my noble Friend the Marquess of Ripon, and which appeared to receive the assent of the Secretary of State for India, could be carried into effect. I have only to add one word more, and that is to express my own opinion that while it is desirable that a certain number of nominations to the Legislative Councils in India may be made in this manner, yet I am far from thinking that it would be wise at the present time to enact that all the non-official members of the Council should be nominated after such consultation; and I will give your Lordships an illustration showing how difficult it would be to create such a rule with fairness to the people of India. I take it that in the Lower Province of Bengal the representation of the ryots, the cultivators of the soil—that is, the great mass of the people must be provided for by the selection of some person by the Lieutenant Governor, for instance, some member of the Civil Service who has paid great attention to the wants of the ryots, and who can represent those wants in the Legislative Council. Taking any system that could be applied to Bengal at the present time for the purpose of selecting a representative by the recommendation of Public Bodies, it would be exceedingly unlikely that anyone really representing the great mass of the cultivators of the soil would be recommended. Therefore, I think, there should always be some power reserved to the Governors and Lieutenant Governors of Provinces, in order to provide for the representation of different classes of people—people of different races and different religions—a representation which could not be adequately provided for by any system of election which I have yet seen advocated by anyone who has taken the subject into consideration. I venture, therefore, to move the insertion of the words which I have read.

Amendment moved, at the end of Clause 1, to add—

> "Provided that the Governor General in Council may from time to time, with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council, make regulations as to the conditions under which such nominations, or any of them, shall be made by the Governor General, Governors, and Lieutenant Governors respectively, and prescribe the manner in which such regulations shall be carried into effect."—(*The Earl of Northbrook.*)

*VISCOUNT CROSS: The noble Lord who has just sat down has most accurately described what I had the honour of stating to your Lordships when I introduced this Bill, and therefore it is unnecessary for me to repeat anything I then said, because it has been so plainly put before your Lordships by the noble Lord. It had always been my intention when this Bill became law, which I hope will soon be the case, to follow the example of Sir Charles Wood, and in sending out a copy of the Act to send with it a despatch pointing out how these members of Council might very well be nominated, so as not only to give the Governor General, the Governors, and Lieutenant Governors, sufficient additional assistance, as they might require, but that they might get the best representatives of the people of the country. But the noble Lord has said that there might be some possible legal difficulty experienced in carrying that out, unless there was something in the Act of Parliament showing how that might be done. Nothing was, or is, further from my mind than to leave a legal difficulty open for further dispute; and therefore I have not the smallest objection to insert such words in order to make quite clear the intention of the Legislature in passing this Act of Parliament. There is one further advantage in inserting words of this kind, and that is that their insertion will satisfy the people of India that this matter has been thought of and considered, when they find that this particular point is referred to in the Act itself which practically increases the number of persons who are to be nominated. I do not think, therefore, that I should be justified now in taking up more of your Lordships' time upon the matter than I have already done, because I should only be repeating what I said on the Second Reading of the Bill. I have no objection to the insertion of those words.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I am extremely glad to hear that the noble Viscount will accept the words proposed by the noble Lord behind me. I am bound to say that I can express my own satisfaction, because I regard this as to a certain extent admitting the elective principle. I understand that this will enable the Governor General, Governors, and Lieutenant Governors to put into the hands of certain public bodies the selection of the persons who are to be nominated by him to the Council. That may not not be, strictly speaking, what we should call election; but I welcome this clause as opening the door—because I should wish to leave an open door—to the Government to practically leave the selection to bodies who will, in fact, elect the representatives. I entirely agree with my noble Friend behind me that it is not desirable that this system, whatever it may be which is adopted, should be extended to the whole of the non-official members; in other words, it is most essential in India that the interests of minorities should be protected. It has been found in this country not very easy to protect the interests of minorities by any contrivance that can be devised; but there must be found some mode in India of seeing that minorities such as the important body of Mahomedans, who are frequently in a minority in parts of that country, are fully represented. There are several reasons, as my noble Friend stated, for adopting that course. It is not, of course, really possible that the ryots should be represented otherwise than by such persons as may be selected by the Governors. These, my Lords, are the reasons why I thoroughly agree with the noble Lord that this will be an improvement to the Bill, and I can only hope that, under a judicious use of those powers by the Governor General, with all such safeguards as would be necessary in carrying out a very important experiment such as this, this enactment will be found to be a very valuable addition to the constitution of the Councils in India.

On question; "That the proposed words stand part of the Bill," agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: Your Lordships may have observed that when questions have been put either in this or in the other House of Parliament with regard to grievances or complaints in India, one of two answers is generally given, either that the Secretary of State for India has not had the matter referred to him, and he knows nothing about it, or that the matter has been decided by the Indian Government, and he cannot go back from what they have done. On one of the occasions last Session when I put a question to the noble Viscount I was making no complaint against individual officials, but rather against the system that was going on—I called attention to cases of men and women who had been fined and imprisoned for trifling infractions of the Revenue Laws in regard to the manufacture of salt. I am glad of this opportunity of thanking the noble Viscount for saying that he would inquire into the matter, for he inquired to such good purpose that a very short time afterwards it was announced that resolutions had been passed prohibiting prosecutions in future for trivial infractions of the Revenue Laws in regard to salt. But it is not only natives who have to suffer from injustice, but also Englishmen. There was the case of a Mr. Crole who obtained justice from my noble Friend, and before that from Earl Kimberley. Mr. Crole having been suspended through the action of a Member of the Madras Council, came home to England and laid his case before

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the Secretary for India. He was ordered to be, and was, re-instated as far as he could be re-instated; but as his place had been taken in the meantime by somebody else, he had to be placed in an inferior position, and he lost besides a year's salary. I believe the noble Viscount afterwards gave him that year's salary; but I do not know whether it came out of the pockets of the taxpayers or had to be made good by those who had suspended him. There can be no reason for any obstacle being placed in the way of the Government knowing in time what has been done by its subordinates; therefore, my Lords, I beg leave to move the Amendment of which I have given notice. Perhaps the noble Viscount will be able also to tell me whether the four restrictions contained in Clause 19 of the Act of 1861 will still be in force, and if that which is not forbidden by those restrictions will be permitted?

Amendment moved, on Page 2, at end of Clause 2, to add—

" Provided also that rules made under this Act shall not prohibit questions being asked relating to complaints respecting alleged acts of maladministration within British territory." (*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

***VISCOUNT CROSS**: In reply to the last observation of the noble Lord, the four restrictions he refers to will undoubtedly be in force. I know of no others. As to my noble Friend's Amendment, I think the words he proposes would be dangerous, and they would certainly be superfluous. In the first place, the rules are to be drawn up by the Governor General, and if we permit questions to be asked I think it should be for him to consider the matter. I think the Viceroy should have the power of putting a stop to any question if he thinks it advisable, because it might be entirely against the public interest for certain questions to be answered. That liberty you must leave to the Viceroy, Governors, and Lieutenant Governors. Therefore I should say that those words would be utterly useless, because no such rule would ever be made as to prevent any general inquiry into cases of maladministration. In fact the object of giving this right of asking questions is for the purpose of interrogating the Government upon their acts. At the same time, it is necessary to preserve the power of the Viceroy, Governors, and Lieutenant Governors, to prevent any question being asked, or at all events to refuse an answer in case it should be in his opinion injurious to the public interest. I hope, therefore, your Lordships will not desire that that Amendment should be adopted.

On Question, "That the proposed words stand part of the Bill," resolved in the negative.

Clause 3 and Clause 4 agreed to.

LORD HERSCHELL: After Clause 4, I have to move a new clause in reference to the powers of Indian Provincial Legislatures. I need not say anything further about it on the present occasion, because I stated all I had to say about it upon going into Committee.

Moved, on page 3, after clause, to insert the following new clause:—

"The local legislature of any province in India may from time to time, by Acts passed under and subject to the provisions of the Indian Councils Act, 1861, and with the previous sanction of the Governor General, but not otherwise, repeal or amend as to that province any law or regulation made either before or after the passing of this Act by any authority in India other than that local legislature: Provided that an Act or a provision of an Act made by a local legislature, and subsequently assented to by the Governor General in pursuance of the Indian Councils Act, 1861, shall not be deemed invalid by reason only of its requiring the previous sanction of the Governor General under this section."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

On question, "That the proposed words stand part of the Bill," agreed to.

Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next; and to be printed as amended. (No. 40.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, March 13, 1890.

LICENSED HOUSES IN BRITISH INDIA.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbrightshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he can inform the House of the number of shops or houses in each province of British India licensed for the retail sale of opium, ganja, and bhang respectively, and in how many of these opium is allowed to be smoked or otherwise consumed on the premises; also how many fresh licenses of each description have been issued during the last financial year?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (SIR J. GORST, Chatham): The figures for which the hon. Member asks are contained in a Return which is too lengthy to read to the House, but I shall be glad to show them to him.

MR. M. STEWART: What is the answer of the right hon. Gentleman to the second part of the question?

SIR J. GORST: The hon. Member will find that information also in the Return which I am prepared to show to him.

THE ZHOB VALLEY EXPEDITION.

SIR HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State and the Government of India will consider the claims of the force which composed the Zhob Valley Expedition, detached from Quetta, under Brigadier General Sir Oriel Tanner, during September to December, 1884, to the Frontier Medal, as a recognition of the valuable services rendered by that force, exposed to much sickness and hardship, in restoring order amongst the tribes of the Zhob Valley, after their defeat at the action of Dowlutzai, and considering that the Frontier Medal has been recently granted to the Hazura and Sikkim Expeditions, and that the warm approval of the Government of India was awarded to the Quetta Field Force?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): In the absence of my right hon. Friend, I beg to say that the Secretary of State can add nothing to the answers which were given to similar questions in this House on the 4th of May, 1885, and the 18th of March and 16th of April, 1886. The services of the troops who took part in the expedition were recognised by the Government of India and by the Secretary of State. No further recognition is considered necessary.

THE FACTORIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL (INDIA).

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the attention of the India Office has been called to the following clause in the Factories Act Amendment Bill, now before the Viceroy's Legislative Council:—

> "Every occupier of a factory in which women and children are employed shall, before the beginning of each month, fix, according to the castes or classes to which such women or children belong or otherwise, not less than four days in each month to be observed as holidays by each woman or child employed in the factory, and shall forthwith give notice of the days so fixed to such officer as the Local Government may from time to time appoint in this behalf;"

whether this clause will leave it open to a millowner to give some of the women and children in his employment holidays at one time and some at another, instead of having the same four fixed holidays in each month for all without distinction; and whether, in the former case, the clause is an evasion of the instructions of Lord Cross in his telegram of 14th May, 1889, in which he said—

> "I would provide for four days' holiday or absence per month for women as agreed upon by Bombay millowners, Bombay operatives, and Bombay Government?"

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have been requested by my right hon. Friend to answer this question. On the 29th of December last the Government of India telegraphed with reference to the Secretary of State's telegram of the 14th of May—

> "After consulting Local Governments and Administrations we are of opinion that the best method of providing four holidays a month to women is to amend Section 89 of the old Act by making it applicable to women as well as for children; and as some holidays are not always appropriate to different castes and classes, to add a proviso permitting the substitution of different days in special cases."

These proposals of the Government of India were approved by the Secretary of State in a telegram of the 14th of January. They provide in the most convenient manner for the four days' holiday per month ordered in the Secretary of State's telegram of the 14th of March.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE.

Committee to consider of authorising the Secretary of State in Council of India to raise money in the United Kingdom, on the securities of the Revenues of India, for the purchase of the South Indian Railway, and for the discharge and redemption of debentures thereon (Queen's Recommendation signified), upon Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, March 17, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.—(No. 40.)

Amendments reported (according to order).

*VISCOUNT CROSS: My Lords, in moving that this Report be now received I wish to state that, as a matter of course, I telegraphed the Amendment which has been moved by the noble Earl Lord Northbrook, and which I accepted the other day, to the Viceroy. The Viceroy desires me to state to your Lordships that he entirely approves the Amendment which I then accepted.

Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

DOCK ACCOMMODATION AT BOMBAY.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: My Lords, I hardly know whether the question which I am about to ask should be addressed to my noble Friend on the part of the Admiralty or to the Secretary of State for India; but I believe that the Government have made up their minds as to the necessity for a dock at Bombay, and therefore I will put the question to the Secretary of State for India, especially as he answered a similar question in a somewhat hopeful manner two years ago. The question was then put to him by my noble Friend Viscount Midleton, and he then intimated that the wishes of the country would be complied with. I suppose there must be some great reason for the delay, which the noble Viscount will state to us from the correspondence on the subject with the Bombay Government, for I understand that all persons who have considered the question are of opinion that a dock at Bombay is absolutely necessary. I do not wish to weary the House with any platitudes or remarks which have been made on several occasions with regard to our vast interests in the East, but it really does seem to me that the Government have scarcely estimated the very great importance to us of having a dock on the East Indian station. May I remind the House that that station is of very great extent. It comprises an expanse of water upwards of 5,000 miles from east to west, and almost of equal extent from north to south; and in the whole of the vast area of water there is not a single dock which would afford the means of repairing the first-class vessels of our Navy. And let me also remind your Lordships that the necessity for this dock accommodation has greatly increased since my noble Friend Viscount Midleton addressed his question to the Government. We have now great interests in the East of Africa, and during those two years the importance of Zanzibar has very considerably increased. As time goes on we shall no doubt have—in view of the increased interests which will come into play in the East Indian Station—to meet further demands for furnishing the means of repairing our ships out there. From Bombay, in the direction of the Isthmus of Suez, there is a stretch of water upwards of 2,000 miles in extent; it is upwards of 2,000 miles again to Singapore, where there is only a very inferior dock, and it is about as much to the Mauritius, where there is another dock. There was one place where we formerly had a dock in one of the finest situations in the East for repairing vessels, Trincomalee, but that no longer exists; or, if it does exist, it is now quite unadapted for repairing such vessels as we have at present on that station. Let me remind my noble Friend, too, that our interests are increasing in the direction of the Persian Gulf; and it is quite possible that before many years pass we may see a Foreign Power in that neighbourhood. There are harbours there which are available for this purpose, and I think something ought to be done; for, as the noble Lord knows, a dock cannot be constructed in a very short time. Even supposing—which I believe is the case—that the Government could construct it much more rapidly than any private company could do it, it would be at least five or six years before a dock could be constructed. At this moment, I believe, there is not a single dock out there on which the Government could lay its hand for the purpose of repairing our first-class ironclads. Last year I pointed out to the House that it had actually happened that when two of our ships wanted repair they had to be taken to Nagasaki and Yeddo, simply because there was no dock on the

China station capable of taking them for repairing purposes. These are very serious considerations for us, and I will remind the noble Lord that at the time of the French war, 50 or 60 years ago, the country was in a much better position for the protection of its commerce than it is now. In those days we actually were able to build some of the finest line-of-battleships in the Navy at Bombay, and all our vessels could then be repaired without the slightest difficulty on the spot. Now, the ordinary docks are not only incapable of taking in our vessels, but we have not the staff or the means for repairing them, as could formerly be done in the case of the wooden ships of old. I hope the Government and my noble Friend will take some steps to push this matter forward, for I can assure them that all naval men are of one opinion as to the absolute necessity of having docks there, and I would, if I may be allowed, add my own humble opinion that, on every large station, the Government ought to possess docks capable of taking for repairs our largest men-of-war. I beg to move for any Papers which are available.

Moved,

"That there be laid before this House any correspondence with the Bombay Government as to whether any progress has been made in the construction of Government docks at Bombay."—(*The Viscount Sidmouth.*)

*VISCOUNT CROSS: This matter has been before your Lordships for some time, I am sorry to say. Speaking for the Indian Government, they are very anxious that this dock should be made; but at the same time it must be remembered that this dock is not required for Indian, but for Imperial purposes. Correspondence has gone on for some time in the matter between the Admiralty, the Indian Office, and the Treasury, and I am afraid the result has not been very satisfactory. The Admiralty have sent me this answer—

> "The Admiralty are strongly of opinion that a first class naval dock is required at Bombay, but under the pressure of other claims upon the Government, it is not possible at present to allot Imperial funds to cover the share of the cost of a dock of this nature, and they also think it undoubtedly inexpedient at the present time to lay any Papers on the subject before Parliament."

With regard to what has been going on in India itself, for the information of the noble Viscount and that of the House, I may state that the Port Trust Dock at Bombay is rapidly proceeding, and although that is not a dock of the description required, its length is considerable. Its length is 500 feet, the floor is 62 feet across, the depth at ordinary spring tides is 27¼ feet, and the width at the coping 90 feet. I am told that this dock will be ready in the early part of 1891, if the present rate of progress goes on. So that, at all events, we may see that the people and Government of India are doing something themselves in the matter. I wish I could give an answer with regard to the construction of a larger dock, but I am afraid that is all I can do at present.

*VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: I should like to ask whether the Government will have the power of using that dock—can the Government lay hands upon it at any time?

*VISCOUNT CROSS: I never like to answer questions finally without notice, but I think I may say that I have not the slightest doubt that would be so. The Government could obtain the absolute power of using that dock, if wanted.

The Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, March 17, 1890.

DESTRUCTION OF A HINDOO TEMPLE.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the destruction of a Hindoo Temple at Durbhunga, under the Bengal Government, by direction of Mr. Beadon, the Chairman of the Durbhunga Municipality, on 8th January last, under circumstances which have caused some stir in Hindoo society; whether he is aware that Mr. Beadon alleged, as his reason for ordering the demolition of the temple, that it was one for which the sanction of the Municipality was required, under Section 237 of Act 3 of the Bengal Council of 1884, and that such sanction had not been obtained; whether he is aware that, on the day before the demolition was commenced, four of the

Municipal Commissioners had sent a requisition to the Vice Chairman that a special meeting should be called to consider the matter, with the object of the requisite sanction being passed; whether he is aware that the Vice Chairman, in direct contravention of Section 39 of the above-mentioned Act, which binds him to call a meeting, did not call the same as required, but proceeded at once with the demolition of the temple, employing Mahomedans for the purpose, supported by Government police with firearms, and arresting the Brahmin priests on the spot; and when he expects to be in possession of the decision of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in regard to this matter?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E): In the absence of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India I have to say that no information upon this subject has reached the Secretary of State.

POSTAL RATES BETWEEN ENGLAND AND INDIA.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to a letter, dated the 16th of April 1889, and sent by the Secretary of State for India in Council to the honourable Member for Canterbury, which contains the following words:—

> "Viscount Cross would view with much satisfaction any reduction in the postal rates between England and India." "Such a reduction, if made, would be made mainly, though not exclusively, in the interests of England, and of the English community in India";

and, whether he intends to take action so as to reduce the postal rates to India?

***MR. RAIKES**: I have seen in the Press the letter referred to by the hon. Member; but I have not received any official communication from the India Office on the subject.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the Secretary of State in Council of India to raise in the United Kingdom, on the securities of the Revenues of India, any sum or sums of money, not exceeding in the whole the sum of £5,267,556 11s. 2d., for the purchase of the South Indian Railway, and for the discharge and redemption of debentures thereon.

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 18, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.—(No. 40.)

Read 3ª (according to order); an Amendment made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, March 18, 1890.

ENTERIC FEVER IN INDIA.

MR. COBB (Rugby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he has any information to show whether the steadily increasing death-rate from enteric fever among European troops in India occurs in an exceptionally high ratio among those recently re-vaccinated; whether he is aware that there was a large increase in the number of cases of enteric fever when the children who were vaccinated in 1853, in consequence of the compulsory Vaccination Act of that year, began to come forward as recruits and be re-vaccinated in 1871 and the following years; and whether he will, as an experiment, arrange for the abrogation for a suitable time of the present Regulation for the compulsory re-vaccination of recruits, which is now applicable even to those pitted with small-pox, so that a statistical test may be afforded as to whether those recruits who may elect not to be re-vaccinated thereby reduce their liability to enteric fever?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: The Secretary of State has no information on the points raised in the first two paragraphs of the question, nor does he consider himself responsible for the medical treatment of recruitss.

Wednesday, March 19, 1890.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE.

Resolution reported,

> "That it is expedient to authorise the Secretary of State in Council of India to raise in the United Kingdom, on the securities of the Revenues of India, any sum of money, not exceeding in the whole the sum of £5,267,556 11s. 2d., for the purchase of the South Indian Railway, and for the discharge and redemption of debentures thereon."

***MR. BRADLAUGH** (Northampton): I do not wish to prevent this formal stage from being taken, but I do desire to intimate to the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the measure that if he wished to prevent a debate on the Second Reading—which I have no wish to raise, as I understand there is need for passing the Bill during a limited period—he will say something as to the new policy of the Indian Government with regard to railways and the grants of land and mineral rights, especially as there is a material difference in their statements last year and this Session in reference to the Chittagong and Assam Railway. I simply say these few words to avoid delay on the Second Reading.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): This Vote was obtained in Committee without explanation as to the purposes and objects with which it was put forward. We have not heard a word from any responsible Minister as to the reason why £5,000,000 should be raised here for the service of India, and if, as appears to be suggested now, the Second Reading is to be taken without discussion or full explanation as to the present policy and attitude of the Government with regard to Indian revenue, it is perfectly unreasonable to expect the House of Commons to assent without protest. It certainly is unreasonable to expect a stage of an important measure like this to be taken without debate on such a day and at such an hour as this. The question of railways in India is one which requires to be threshed out at considerable length. Questions have been raised here and in India as to railway works which many people would like to see undone. Enormous sums of money have been spent on these works, some of which are unremunerative, and it is a question whether it is fair to charge India for millions of capital upon which a dividend is guaranteed to English capitalists. I only rose for the purpose of protesting against the formal way in which important Resolutions of this kind are passed—without a single word of explanation.

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The hon. Member, I think, could not have been in the House when the first stage—that is to say, the Committee stage in which the Resolution was agreed to—was taken, because a question was put by an Irish Member, and I then gave a very concise, but still a true, explanation of the provisions of the Bill. The object of the Bill I can state in three minutes, and it may be as well that I should do so now. It is to enable the Secretary of State to purchase the Great Southern of India Railway, which at present bears a guarantee for the most part of 5 per cent., by raising funds at 3 per cent. which would cause a saving to the revenues of India of £36,800 sterling a year. In 1873 the Great Southern of India purchased the railway, but in the contract with the Secretary of State there was a clause empowering the Secretary of State in 1890 to purchase these railways on an average price of Stock during three years previous; but that could only be done by giving notice on the 1st of March; accordingly, the notice was given on the 1st of March this year of intention to purchase on the 31st of December next. The necessary legal steps having been taken, the Bill has been brought in to give effect to the purchase. There is £3,200,000 of stock at 5 and 4¾ per cent. valued at 131 per cent, something over £1,000,000 of debentures at 3½ and 3¾ per cent., and £460,000 of debenture stock that will not be affected by this transaction; that is to say, there is £5,200,000 to pay for the railway. There is no opposition to the Bill, and it cannot impose a fresh burden on the people of India, for, as a matter of fact, it will effect a saving. There is no question of waste lands. As to what the hon. Member for Northampton has asked I can give him the answer he desires in regard to the Assam Railway. The Secretary of State does not altogether approve of the terms the Government of India propose with regard to giving waste lands in Assam as part payment for the making of the line. The Government guarantee a grant of certain lands, but have reduced the amount of the concession to be given in that particular. That has nothing to do with the Bill in question, which deals with a guarantee on the old principle of 5 per cent.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Is the income of this Southern Railway sufficient to meet its liabilities?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: No Sir; I am sorry to say that is not the case. There is an annual deficiency of about £140,000 on this line, but that will be reduced by this change. As the hon. Member has truly said, some railways in India do not earn the interest guaranteed on their capital, yet I should have grave doubts whether any railway can be said to be unremunerative which tends to develop a country and give greater security.

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir James Fergusson and Sir John Gorst.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.

Bill to empower the Secretary of State in Council of India to raise money in the United Kingdom for the purchase of the South Indian Railway; and for other purposes relating thereto. Presented and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 195.]

Thursday, March 20, 1890.

THE DUMDUM MURDER.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to a telegram from Calcutta in the *Daily News* of the 17th inst., stating that

> "The discharge of the prisoner in the Dumdum murder case is causing much popular indignation, and is called a miscarriage of justice;"

whether the case alluded to is, that of a British soldier named Thomas O'Hara, who was tried at the Criminal Sessions of the High Court of Calcutta for the wilful murder of a native named Shaik Soleem, in the Cantonment of Dumdum, and who was sentenced to death on 21st February last; whether he is aware that the presiding Judge, the Hon. Mr. Justice Norris, in passing sentence, declared that "he entirely endorsed and accepted the verdict of the jury," and that the prisoner "had been guilty of about as brutal a murder as ever was perpetrated;" and whether, if this is the case referred to in the *Daily News* telegram, he has any information which would explain the alleged discharge of the prisoner?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): On behalf of my right hon. Friend I have to say that the Secretary of State has seen the telegram in the *Daily News* referred to. The Secretary of State has no official information on the subject; but from the telegrams in the *Times* it seems that the case was brought before the High Court of Calcutta for revision in the ordinary way; that it was argued for four days before the Chief Justice and four other Judges; that the Court took time to consider their judgment, and subsequently held that there had been a misdirection of the jury and an improper admission of evidence; and that the conviction must be quashed and the prisoner discharged.

SIR W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): Will the Secretary of State for India send instructions to the Government of India to have this man put upon his trial again?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: Well, Sir; I think that before that proceeding is considered it would be as well to be in cossession of the Report.

THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT AND THE BOMBAY DEFENCES.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the attention of the Secretary of State has been drawn to the remarks made by His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught recently at Bombay, as reported in the *Times* of Monday last—

> "The recent naval manœuvres had proved exactly what he had expected, namely, that the Bombay defences with their present armament were absolutely useless and could not oppose a naval attack. In the absence of Admiral Fremantle's fleet in Zanzibar waters, the naval element of defence was quite useless, because the ships were without crews, and had neither gunners nor firemen to enable them to supply the deficiencies of the land defences."

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: The Secretary of State has seen the telegram in the *Times* purporting to be a report of the remarks attributed to His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught. Arrangements have been made with the War Office for the supply of new armament, and with the Admiralty, subject to the approval of the Treasury, for manning the floating defences.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled "An Act to amend 'The Indian Councils Act, 1861.'" [Indian Councils Bill [*Lords.*]

Friday, March 21, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL. [LORDS].

Bill read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 197.]

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL. (No. 195.)

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(11.34.) **MR. A. O'CONNOR** (Donegal, E.): This, Sir, is a Bill which relates to a portion of the Empire, the inhabitants of which have no effective control over the administration of affairs in their own country. It is only in this House that there is the best chance of justice being done to them in any respect. With reference to this particular measure — which is a large measure of a financial character—a Resolution was submitted in Committee, and was passed in Committee late at night without a single word of explanation. That Resolution was reported with only a show of explanation when it was challenged, and the right hon. Gentleman who made that explanation will, I feel sure, not be offended if I say he did not appear to possess any more information than he was bound officially to possess, which was absolutely nothing. He did not inform the House of the character of the Bill, of the reason why it was introduced, or of the conditions attached to it. And now we are asked, after half-past 11 o'clock, to read the Bill a second time without a word of explanation as to its scope or the justification there may be for it. The measure proposes to enable the Secretary of State for India to deal with a sum of no less than five and a quarter millions sterling. The Preamble sets forth that

> "Whereas the Secretary of State in Council, by virtue of the power vested in him, under a contract between him and the Company, give notice on the third day of March, 1890, to the South Indian Railway Company, of his intention to purchase the undertaking of the Company. Be it enacted," &c.

We have had no explanation how it is that the Secretary of State is vested with authority to go to a Company in India and say, "I will buy your Company for £10,000,000 or £15,000,000," or whatever he agrees to give, and how is it that then, without the people of India having an opportunity to express their views, an arrangement can be made to saddle them with an annual charge for an undertaking that may be perfectly worthless? I think it is due to this House that some sort of explanation should be offered, not only with regard to the contract under which the Secretary of State has the power to offer to buy this South Indian Railway Company, but also as to the condition of the railway itself, and the reasonableness of the sum of money offered for its purchase. The contract exists. We are not told what its terms are. I am aware that in one case, at any rate, of a guaranteed railway, the Secretary of State undertook to contribute so much a year, or at any rate to pay a certain amount of interest for 25 years on condition that, at the end of the term, he should be at liberty to give notice of the purchase of the line at a sum not exceeding 25 times the average annual profit of the last five years. But are these the conditions upon which this line is to be purchased? We are not told what they are. If they are the conditions, the Indian Government ought to get the line for nothing. We are to be asked to vote an amount of between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 for the line. Before we are asked to consent to saddle the people of India, who are already exceedingly heavily burdened in respect of railways, with this further sum, we ought to be told what are the further liabilities which the Government will incur in respect of the line, over and above this large sum. For instance, what are the liabilities in respect of allowances which appear to figure so heavily in every Department of the Indian Service? Then I should to ask what is the condition of this line? Is it a line of some 654 miles in length, running from Madras to Trichinopoly and another place in the Presidency of Madras? I do not know what its condition is, and I defy any one who takes the trouble to wade through the Annual Reports of "the moral and material progress," as it is called, of the people of India, through the different Reports of railways furnished to this House, or the Annual Statistical Statements of the Indian Empire, to find any indication of the condition of this line. But what we do know from the Report of the Committee of this House in the year 1871, is that one of the railways started in India not so very many years before, and purchased at the expense of the people of India, was in so bad a condition that within a very few years no less than 2,000 bridges and other important structures had to be rebuilt at the expense of the public. It may be that this line is in no better a plight. So much with regard to the condition of the line and the relations of the company to the Government. The Secretary of State is to be allowed to raise this money in bonds and debentures and stock at such interest as may appear to him to be necessary, or fit and proper. But we are not offered a single word of explanation as to what interest these bonds, or debentures, or stock are to bear, or at what prices or on what terms they are likely to be issued. Then what is the history of the line? Its history is, no doubt, in point of passenger traffic and goods traffic, in one respect satisfactory, because the number of passengers has gone up within a comparatively small number of years from 5,000,000 a year to about 7,000,000, and the amount of goods carried from some 827,000 tons to over 1,000,000 tons. These figures will be found in the Statistical Abstract for India, issued last Session, pages 161 to 169. But that is not everything. It is necessary to compare the receipts and expenditure for the corresponding periods. If we do that, what do we find? We find that of all the guaranteed railways in India this is far and away the most unsatisfactory. The Madras Guaranteed Railway is worked at a percentage of working expenses to gross receipts of 58. The Oude and Rohilkund Railway is worked at an average of 57·38, the Great Indian Peninsula at 46·2, and the Bombay and Baroda at 44 per cent. This line has been worked at a total of no less than 68·98. This is a highly unsatisfactory line, which you propose to buy at the expense of the people of England. The capital expended on the South Indian line to the 31st of December, 1888, was £4,695,000. The net revenue was £160,000 for the year, but the amount of guaranteed interest was no less than £213,600, so you have an annual loss of £53,000. And this is the Government you are going to perpetuate, and this is the kind of Bill which is submitted to the House of Commons, late at night, without a single word of explanation from any responsible Minister. I think there is good ground for objection against legislation of this kind, especially when it is in regard to a community which has no effective opportunity of expressing its grievances, or protecting itself from injustice. I believe you are buying a thing which, as regards real market value, is practically worthless. I should like to know all the conditions of the contract entered into by the Secretary of State with the Company. The House ought to be put in possession of the terms of that contract before it is invited to consent to the appropriation of this money. As a matter of fact, I think this railway ought to be left on the hands of those who own it, and if it can be worked at a profit, well and good. The State does not come down in England and buy rotten concerns in the shape of railways. It may be contended that this line is important from a strategic point of view, but I hope, before any hon. member accepts that argument, he will carefully consider where this line runs—it runs down to near the southern extremity of the Peninsular from Madras. It is nowhere near the Russian Frontier; nowhere near Afghanistan, or any place where there may be frontier disturbances. These are considerations which strike one on looking at the Bill.

Now, I have employed half the time allowed for the discussion. I leave the other half of the time for a satisfactory explanation, if it be possible, at the hands of the right hon. Gentleman who has charge of the Bill.

*(11.45.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Nothing could be more legitimate than for the hon. Member, who is interested in the subject, to ask for an explanation of the measure, but he does less than justice when he says I have offered no explanation hitherto of the provisions of the Bill. When I moved the formal Motion in Committee, on Friday last, I stated to the House that it was intended by the purchase of this line to save the revenue of India £37,000 a year—I think I said about £40,000. I could do no more at the time, but on the next occasion I gave fuller explanation, though, unhappily, it was at such a late hour it could not be listened to. I shall be happy to give such other explanation as is in my power, though I admit I am at a disadvantage owing to the absence of my right hon. Friend (Sir J. Gorst) who is attending the Labour Conference at Berlin. I think, however, I can satisfy the House there is no job in this matter, and that it is a profitable transaction to the revenue of India. I need not go into the political question. Those responsible for the government of India have well considered this matter, and I think they are entering into a transaction which is for the benefit of India. I ask the House to consider, in the first place, that, unless the line be purchased, the Government of India is committed to pay a guaranteed interest of 5 per cent. for 999 years upon the capital expended in the construction of this railway. It was one of the early railways of India, formed upon a comprehensive plan, and calculated to develop the resources of India, providing, as it did, the main trunk routes. At the time the guarantee was made, 5 per cent. was the normal rate of interest in India. In 1873 there was an amalgamation of two separate lines, and the opportunity was afforded to the Secretary of State to take power to purchase the undertaking in 1890, by giving notice after the 1st of March upon a valuation on an average of the price of the stock during the last three years. On the 3rd of March, accordingly, the Secretary of State gave the requisite notice, and valuations were made on his part and on the part of the Railway Company, which did not greatly differ. The difference was readily adjusted, so that the value of the 5 and 4½ per-cent. stocks, calculated on the average price of the last three years, was reckoned at an amount of £4,197,557. That is the price of the 5 per cent. stock., together with a small quantity of 4½ stock—only, I think, £142,000; and there are debentures which mature at periods dating from 1891 to 1896. The annual saving by this transaction will be £36,813. The hon. Member asks what security is there to the public that this line will not involve a heavy additional capital expenditure? Will the House take it from me that that security is afforded under the provisions under which guaranteed lines are inspected by officers of the Government of India, and the necessary amount expended annually? I state this from my own knowledge, having administered for five years railways over a large part of India, which is under the Bombay Government for railway purposes. I assure the House that every care is taken that the railways are maintained in a thoroughly regular manner, so that no further capital charge can fall on the State. The hon. Member has referred to the fact that the working expenses of this line are 68 per cent. of the gross receipts. That is true, and there is an annual loss of Rx 64,000 on the guaranteed interest of the railway. That loss will be diminished by the sum I have mentioned. It is an exceedingly useful line for the general purposes of India, and its receipts are increasing. It is really too late now to debate the question of a general railway policy. The railways have been made, and are, broadly speaking, remunerative. No doubt there are some railways which do not earn the interest guaranteed on their capital, besides the military lines. But they are protective in another sense, not less important. They indirectly repay their cost, and some are in themselves guarantees against famines. The railways are very closely scrutinised and administered by highly honourable

men, and it is an unworthy thing to say that the accounts are not correct. There is no question that this expenditure on railways has been highly profitable to India, and I submit that the House would do well to sanction this purchase.

(11.55.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: I should like, with the indulgence of the House, to explain that I have examined all the Blue Books sent here from India, and I find it is perfectly impossible to reconcile any two of them, that the annual statement of revenue does not agree with the Railways Returns, that the figures are given differently, sometimes in rupees and sometimes in pounds sterling, and that it is quite impossible to make the thing out.

*(11.56.) SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I am sorry we have not longer time to discuss this question. Nevertheless, I think we are indebted to the hon. Gentleman for bringing this question forward. I regret this purchase, not on the ground the hon. Member has stated, but on a different ground. I believe it is not to the interest of any country that its railways should be in the hands of the Government. Railways are much more likely to develop under a system of open competition, and if the hon. Gentleman goes to a Division I shall certainly follow him into the Lobby. At the same time, I wish just to explain that I am satisfied there is no job whatever in this matter, and that the Indian Government have exercised every care in the provision they have made with reference to this purchase.

(11.58) SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lanc., N.E., Clitheroe): I should like to point out that this is a case in which there is a guarantee from the Government, and that consequently there is a loss every year which the Government has to meet. This contract will result in a saving of £36,000 a year, and therefore in the interest of the Indian people we should do well to consent to this Bill.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): We have never yet received any satisfactory reason from the Government as to why they pick and choose between the railways. Why not buy the Great Peninsula Railway?

It being midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Monday, March 24, 1890.

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is a fact, as stated by the *Athenæum*, that Colonel Hammond has been instructed to prepare for publication an expurgated edition of the *History of the Second Afghan War*, compiled by Captain S. Pasfield Oliver, R.A., under the orders and supervision of the late Sir Charles Mac Gregor, when that Officer was Quartermaster of India, which was printed in six volumes by the Intelligence Branch of the Quartermaster General's Department at Simla and Calcutta; and, if so, what objection there is to this history being now published *in extenso*, in order that Military students may learn the entire truth of the origin and conduct of that war?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: A revised edition of the work referred to has been prepared under the orders of the Government of India. It included originally confidential papers which, in the opinion of the Government of India and the Secretary of State, ought not to be given. The usefulness of the book is quite independent of those confidential papers.

SIKKIM.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can inform the House if a settlement has yet been arrived at with the Chinese Government and the authorities of Thibet regarding the question of Sikkim; and, if so, what are the terms of settlement; and when Papers relating to the subject will be presented to Parliament?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am happy to be able to inform the House that a Convention settling the boundary of Thibet and Sikkim, and other matters relating to it, has been signed by the Viceroy of India and the Plenipotentiary of the Emperor of China. The Convention is on its way to this country for ratification, and when this has been given it will be laid before Parliament.

***MR. BRYCE**: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the question with regard to the presentation of the Papers relating to the subject. Does he propose to present any, and if so, when?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: I presume that Papers will be presented when the Convention has been ratified.

***MR. BRYCE**: Presented by the Government of India?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: By one Department or the other.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): May I ask to what day it is proposed to defer Order No. 6, which is the Second Reading of the Indian Councils Bill?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: The Second Reading will be deferred until the 17th of April, but I am unable to say whether the Bill will come on on that day or not.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [21st March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

***SIR G. CAMPBELL** (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do not want to oppose the passing of this Bill, but I do want some explanation in regard to it. The Bill gives power to the Government to acquire an important railway in India, and while I do not agree with the hon. Member for the City of London, who said he did not like such transfers, but, on the contrary, am strongly of opinion that these great lines of communication should be in the hands of the Government, I should like to know something about the principle of guaranteeing railways in the hands of private companies. Holding the opinion that it is desirable the Government in India should have the control of railways, I should like the Government also to construct the lines. But the course followed is this: the Government guarantee interest on a railway, and when the railway, in consequence of this guarantee, has gone up to a premium, then the Government buys up the railway. I admit at once that the policy laid down by that great statesman, Lord Dalhousie, has been justified by success, but now that the Government have the great machinery in their hands, and have the means of making railways, and can get the money for the construction on terms much cheaper than a company, I cannot see why the Government should sacrifice the interests of the people of India in order to put great premiums into the pockets of syndicates in the City of London. No better illustration could be found than this South of India line. This is not one of the great lines laid down by Lord Dalhousie in old days; this a modern line. It never has paid its expenses, or anything like it, and yet we are required to sanction the purchase of the line, and to pay a high premium for it. What is that premium? Looking at the price current of the line, I suppose it is some 30 per cent., and that is the sort of price the Government have to pay. Now, I could quite understand the adoption of a policy that required the Government should have the railways in their hands, and, pursuing that policy, the Government declared they would guarantee no more railways; but, it seems to me, an extraordinary and most disadvantageous course for the Government to take, going round on a sort of circle, continuing to guarantee new lines, and when thereby the line has been run up to a premium, stepping in and buying it. Since the South Indian Railway was constructed the Government have guaranteed a succession of other lines, the Midland line, for instance, forced upon them by a syndicate, and the Bengal and Nagpore line which never can pay its expenses. But we guarantee these lines, and, then when, in the interest of the State, it is thought desirable to buy, then we buy at a high premium. I think before this Bill is passed we ought to have some explanation of what is to be the policy in the future. Do the Government think it is desirable that the railways in India should be owned by the Government, as I presume they do, else why these proposals to buy? and if they do, then why do they continue the system of guarantees, which inevitably end in a large profit to the Company, and as great a loss to the people of India? The premium is solely due not to the profitableness of the lines, but to the guarantee given. I hope we may have some explanation.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: There is but a short time before I shall be compelled to resume my seat, so I will briefly reply, and say the policy of the Government is to construct railways in the cheapest possible manner for the people of India. No fresh guarantee is proposed under this Bill. The proposal is to carry out an arrangement by which an economy of £36,000 will be effected in the interest of the people of India. Under the conditions of the guarantee entered into in 1873, power was reserved to the Secretary of State for India to terminate the guarantee in 1890, and purchase on terms there specified.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What are they?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It is to give effect to that power reserved to the Government, and to effect the economy I have mentioned, we ask the House to sanction the purchase. There is now no question of any new guarantee.

DR. TANNER: There are still a few minutes left, in which I think the right hon. Gentleman might have given us some better explanation. When the Bill was before the House last week it was clearly shown that though this line of railway is something stupendous in length, yet it has never yet paid its working expenses.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It has paid 3 per cent. beyond working expenses.

DR. TANNER: And the guarantee is for 5 per cent.! And we are asked to assent to this job without any explanation. I am giving but an individual opinion, but I certainly think some better explanation should be forthcoming; that we should be put in possession of some facts in relation to the case. I have always taken exception to hurrying through business at this hour——

It being midnight, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to interrupt the business.

Whereupon, Mr. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," put accordingly, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

Tuesday, March 25, 1890.

THE MAHARAJA SCINDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): In the absence of the Under Secretary for India, I beg to ask the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Secretary of State is aware that the late Maharaja Scindia, in a letter dated 30th June, 1886, asked the Government of India that his son and heir should not be placed "under the instruction of a European tutor," and that, in reply, the Viceroy, by a service telegram, dated 19th June, stated that the Government of India would "make every effort to meet Your Highness's wishes;" whether, in spite of this promise, the two Indian tutors appointed by the late Maharaja have been removed, although the Government of India stated they were "entirely satisfied with the progress His Highness had made" under their care, and a European tutor, Mr. W. D. Johnstone, Principal of Rajkumai College, has been appointed; whether the cost of the education of the Maharaja for salaries alone has been increased from Rs.325 per month to Rs.2,700 per month; and whether the Secretary of State will see that the promise made to the late Maharaja by the Marquess of Dufferin is kept, and that the tutors appointed by the Maharaja shall continue the course of instruction with which the Government of India was entirely satisfied?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The late Maharaja Scindia, in May, 1886, informed the Government of India that he had appointed two native tutors for his son. The Viceroy, in reply, telegraphed, on the 19th of June, that "the Government of India will always be most anxious to act, as far as possible, in accordance with the wishes you have expressed." In reply to the second question of the hon. Member, I have to say that, in 1889, the Government of India, having regard to the Maharaja's age, resolved that the time had come to place His Highness under an English tutor, and Mr. Johnstone was appointed. Mr. Johnstone's salary is Rs.1,500 a month. The Secretary of State has no other information as to the education of the Maharaja. The Government of India, as promised by Lord Dufferin, has "always been most anxious to act, far as possible, in accordance with the wishes" of the late Maharaja. The present arrangement has been approved by the Council of the Regency.

Thursday, March 27, 1890.

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT).

Address for—

"Copies of or Extracts from Correspondence relating to the system of grading Royal Engineers with Civil Engineers on their first appointment to the Public Works Department."—(*Sir Roper Lethbridge.*)

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee).

Clause 1.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) Upon this Bill I desire to offer a few observations, general and particular. In the first place——

THE CHAIRMAN: This first clause contains only the short title, and I do not think the hon. Member would be in order in discussing the merits of the Bill upon this clause.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): Seeing that on a recent occasion when this Bill was before us, and at some such an hour as this, the First Lord of the Treasury cut short the discussion with the Closure Motion, and seeing that there is no time now for debate, I trust the right hon. Gentleman will agree to postpone the Bill to afford opportunity for raising the few points that require discussion. In order that this stage may not be hurried through, as the Second Reading was, I move that you now report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. —(*Dr. Tanner.*)

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): The other night, in the course of a 10 minutes' discussion, I ventured to ask for an explanation which, however, I did not get, and the First Lord stopped all discussion with the Closure. I hope, therefore, the Government will not attempt to press the Bill further now, but will accept the Motion and report Progress.

***THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY** (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I have no objection to the Motion, but let me remind the hon. Gentleman that an explanation was given to the effect that, under an arrangement entered into 20 years ago, the Indian Government paid five per cent. on the company's capital, and that payment would continue for a long term of years, unless the Government availed themselves of the right of purchase which the agreement gives them this year. By the exercise of that power the Government will effect an economy of £36,000 a year in Indian expenditure. If the Bill is defeated, the effect will be that the Government of India will pay £36,000 a year more for the entire period of the agreement. However, I consent to the Adjournment now.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I wish to explain that I am opposing the Bill, not from any motives of obstruction, but because I believe the Bill is a mistake financially and in other respects.

It being 12 o'clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

Friday, March 28, 1890.

MINUTE OF LORD DUFFERIN OF 6TH NOVEMBER, 1888.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he will lay upon the Table the whole of the Minute of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, as Viceroy and Governor General of India, dated 6th November, 1888, portions of which Minute have been already presented to Parliament?

***THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY** (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): No, Sir; in view of the confidential nature of the circumstances, the

Secretary of State cannot lay the Minute upon the Table.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): May I ask whether the object with which this Paper has been asked for both in this and the other House, and the object with which it was granted, was not to communicate to the House the views of the Governor General and other Indian Authorities?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am unable to follow the argument of the hon. Gentleman; but speaking upon the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, I am prepared to say that it is not in the public interests that this Paper should be given.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the whole of this Minute has been printed in India, and that the withholding of it on the part of the Government may place in an unfortunate position the discussion which is likely to arise upon the Indian Council Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I think it is possible that by a serious breach of confidence on the part of some one in the Public Service, what purports to be the Minute may have been given; but that would not justify me, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, in laying the Paper on the Table.

THE LATE MAHARAJA SCINDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the telegram of the Governor of India, on the 19th June, 1886, to the late Maharaja Scindia, was in reply to the dying request of His Highness, that his son should not be placed for instruction under a European tutor; and whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table the complete text of the letter the late Maharaja referred to in the previous answer of the Under Secretary, and of any reply thereto?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I shall be much obliged to the hon. Member if he will postpone this question. I have not been able to communicate with the Secretary of State to-day.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Will Monday do?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Yes; I think I shall be able to answer it on Monday.

MERCANTILE SHIPPING REGULATIONS IN INDIA.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Bill, so far as they affect foreign vessels loading or discharging in British ports, will apply (should they become law) to foreign vessels loading or discharging in Indian ports; and, if not, whether the Secretary of State for India will call the attention of the Government of India to the point, so that British subjects, whether English or Indian, may not be put at a disadvantage?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this question. The Bill would not apply to foreign vessels in Indian ports. It would, however, be open to the Government of India to enact analogous provisions.

SIR R. LETHBRIDGE: Arising out of that answer, I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman who is now representing the India Office here if the Secretary of State will communicate with the Government of India upon the subject?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I think my hon. Friend had better wait and see what the provisions of the Bill are.

EAST INDIA (CRAWFORD CASE.)

Address for—

"Copies of, or Extracts from, Correspondence relating to Memorials from Members of the Civil Service as to the Mamlutdars incriminated in the Crawford Case."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Monday, March 31, 1890.

THE CAMBRIDGE MISSION TO DELHI.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to a letter of the Bishop Designate of Durham, published in the *Times* of 26th March, respecting the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, in which it is stated that "This work was undertaken at the suggestion of the Indian Government, who have given the site;"

and whether this statement is accurate; and, if so, whether this is a departure from the traditional British policy in India of strict neutrality in religious matters?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): In reply to the hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the "work" referred to by the Bishop Designate of Durham is St. Stephen's College, Delhi—an educational establishment of the Cambridge Mission. It has always been the practice of the Government of India to make grants in aid to all institutions calculated to promote the education of the people, and this practice has not been found to interfere with the religious freedom which the British Government guarantees.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

THE MAHARAJA SCINDIA.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the telegram of the Governor of India, of the 19th June, 1886, to the late Maharaja Scindia, was in reply to the dying request of His Highness, that his son should not be placed for instruction under a European tutor; and whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table the complete text of the letter of the late Maharaja referred to in the previous answer of the Under Secretary, and of any reply thereto?

*Sir J. GORST: The character of the request of the late Maharaja Scindia is not correctly described in the question; but it was undoubtedly his wish in June, 1886, that his son, then under 10 years of age, should be under native and not European tutors. This wish was for three years complied with, and the young Maharaja was left during that time under the charge of native tutors only. He is now 15½ years of age; and in the judgment of the Government of India his own interests and those of his people require that, while neither his religion nor caste will be in any way interfered with, he shall be under the charge of a British officer. The Secretary of State does not think it in the interest of the Public Service to lay on the Table either the letter or the reply.

Tuesday, April 1, 1890.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday, 14th April.

Tuesday, April 15, 1890.

THE MADRAS SLAVE TRADE.

Mr. WALTER M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the following statement, which has appeared in several papers:—

> "Information has been received in London which leaves no doubt of the extent of the horrible traffic described as 'the Madras slave trade,' the existence of which has hitherto been only suspected. At a trial at Rangoon one witness, a Madragese girl, declared that she had been forcibly put on board a steamer at Negapatam, taken to Rangoon, and sold for 80 rupees. Another girl, who was seized as she was proceeding to join her husband, was taken to a house, kept a close prisoner for three days, and then sold for 90 rupees. In fact, sufficient evidence was given to show that, although Rangoon is supposed to have an ample police force, the importation and selling of girls goes on systematically;"

and whether the evidence given at this trial has been brought before the notice of the Indian Government; and, if not, whether he will cause inquiries to be made in Madras and in Rangoon as to the facts?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The Secretary of State has seen the statements referred to, and also that the man who committed the offences mentioned has been convicted, and sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. The Governments of Madras and Burma have had their attention directed for many years past to the migration from Madras to Rangoon, and to the necessity for carefully watching it. The law against offences of the kind mentioned in the question is strong, and will be vigorously enforced.

Thursday, April 17, 1890.

INDIA FACTORY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the present position of the India Factory Act Amendment Bill; and whether, having regard to the Resolutions adopted by the recent Conference at Berlin, in relation to the employment of women and children in factories, Her Majesty's Government is prepared to sanction the provisions of such a measure as that proposed by the Government of India?

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham): I have also to ask the Under Secretary for India whether he has seen the statement in the *Times* Calcutta telegram of March 30th—

> "That the Factories Act Amendment Bill has been postponed till next winter, the Government being of opinion that there is no pressing necessity for the measure;"

and, whether any information has been received at the India Office to show that this is the real reason for the postponement of the Bill?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The India Factory Bill has been postponed by the Council in India till the receipt of replies from the Local Governments and Administrations. The Resolutions of the Berlin Conference will be transmitted by the Secretary of State to the Government of India, and will no doubt receive due consideration from them before the Bill is passed into law. No such statement as that referred to by the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean) has been made by the Government of India to the Secretary of State. The reason given by the Government of Bombay for postponing the Factory Bill is that they are awaiting the receipt of replies.

MURDER OF A BENGALI AT DUM DUM.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table of the House the proceedings in the High Court of Calcutta, including the trial and the hearing on appeal, in the case of a soldier named O'Hara, charged with the murder of a Bengali at Dum Dum; and whether he will consent to the Return relating to Murders in India, which stands on the Paper this day?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State is not in possession of any proceedings in the case of O'Hara, which can be laid on the Table; and he is advised that, in criminal cases, proceedings of the kind suggested in the question do not exist. The Secretary of State cannot consent to the Return asked for; it is in some respects impossible, as, when a murder remains undetected, nobody can tell whether it was committed by an European or not. Information as to the number of murders reported to the police, and the number of persons convicted, is to be found in the Statistical Abstract. The further information for which the hon. Member asks, could only be collected, if at all, in India, at a cost which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, would be indefensible.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether any communication has been made to the Secretary of State in reference to the trial and appeal in the case of the soldier charged with the murder of a Bengali?

*SIR J. GORST: I must have notice of that question. I can only say that no communication has been made that I am aware of; but if the hon. Member will give notice, I will inquire.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): From the military aspect of the case, would the inquiry be undertaken by the Government of India, or by the Commander-in-Chief?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE CROPS IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the detailed Reports of the district officials of Madras respecting the condition of the crops in Southern India, which crops were expected to be very short owing to the deficiency of rain, have been received by the Secretary of State; and whether he will lay them upon the Table?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State will be happy to show the hon. Member all the Reports received up to the 22nd of March, which is the latest. They can be made a Parliamentary Paper, if the hon. Member desires. But the rains of the end of December happily removed all cause for apprehending serious scarcity, and there has been no scarcity, though crops are below the average.

PROSPECTS OF AGRICULTURE IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES AND OUDH.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State can give the House any information respecting the state and prospects of agriculture in the North-West Provinces and Oudh; whether he is aware that the wheat crop has greatly suffered, and that, even reckoning land under canal irrigation, it is anticipated that there will not be a two-anna (or one-eight) yield; whether prices of good grains are already rising in the United Provinces; and whether fears are entertained of great scarcity, if not of actual famine?

SIR J. GORST: In reply to the first paragraph of the question of the hon. Member I have to say that the latest Report—that for the week ending March 19—shows that the hill district of Humaon was the only one in which a serious failure of crops was reported. My answer to the second paragraph is that the anticipation of March 12 was that the wheat crop would be two-thirds of the average. The answer to paragraphs 3 and 4 is in the negative. Of 18 central markets noticed in the Report of March 19 the price was stationary at six, rising at five, falling at five, and unsteady at two.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Indian Councils Bill, which stands as the fifth Order of the Day, will be taken?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): It will certainly not be taken either this week or next.

THE AMENDMENT OF THE INDIAN FACTORY ACTS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the letter in the *Times*, of 10th April, from Mr. Holt S. Hallett, relative to the Amendment to the Indian Factory Acts, wherein he quotes the Report of Mr. Meade-King relative to the effect of factory work at an early age upon Indian children:—

> "Nothing has impressed me more in the course of my inspection of the Bombay mills than the unhealthy, stunted, and puny appearance of a great number of the children whom I have seen at work;"

whether his attention has been drawn to the evidence of Mr. Drewett, which was laid before the Factory Commission, regarding the ginning factories in Khandesh, wherein he states that—

> "The women sit on the back of the gins, and have simply to lift up the cotton and push it forward. I have often seen them doing this mechanically, three-parts asleep. I think you will find that the women had worked night and day for as long as a week at a stretch. I do not think there is a double set of children anywhere, and they must also have worked day and night. The women would have worked 23 out of the 24 hours;"

and whether the Government of India are taking any steps to check the abuses reported?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has had his attention directed to the evidence as to the condition of women and children in Indian Factories. The Factory Law Amendment Bill, now before the Indian Legislature, will, to some extent, deal with the existing evils, and will, in particular, bring the ginning factories referred to in paragraph 2 of the question for the first time under legislative restriction. The proceedings of the Berlin Conference will be considered by the Government of India in reference to these matters before the Bill is passed into Law.

EAST INDIA (FINANCIAL STATEMENT).

Address for—

"Copy of the Indian Financial Statement for 1890-91, and of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor General thereon."—(*Sir George Balfour.*)

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

*(4.20.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's Hanover Square): . . . As regards the Customs Receipts on coffee and its satellites, I am not permitted to expect any increase. The history of the past shows that it would be injudicious to do so. In fact, my advisers say that we should estimate about £3,000 less for coffee and £3,000 more for cocoa. On dried fruits I estimate an increase of £14,000. Tobacco, looking at its history for the last two or three years, I estimate to give an increase of £213,000, that is about 2 per cent. on the present importation, while the increase of the population is only at the rate of 1 per cent. As regards tea, I assume that there will be a further transfer from China to Indian and Ceylon tea. I assume that 10,000,000lb. of China tea will be displaced by 7,000,000lb. of Indian and Ceylon tea—a very satisfactory prospect for India, and also a very satisfactory prospect in this respect—namely, that this Indian tea makes so many more cups of tea per pound, in the proportion of ten to seven, so that, practically, tea has been cheapened to the working classes by the displacement by Indian of China tea, if the middleman would only give sufficient influence to this greater cheapness owing to the discovery and development of this great branch of our Indian trade. That diminished consumption of tea is equivalent to about 3,000,000lb., representing a loss of £75,000 in Revenue. On the other hand, we have the fact that tea was not withdrawn in its usual quantities during the last two months of this year in anticipation that the Tea Duty would be reduced. ["Hear, hear," from the Front Opposition Bench.] I hear a smile passing over the face of the right hon. Gentlemen opposite. [*Laughter.*] It was an audible smile. [*Laughter.*] During those two months we estimate that tea was not withdrawn to the amount of £140,000, which, if it had been paid, would have swollen the Receipts of the last year. Now it will come in in the current year. . . . We propose, if we can persuade other interested parties to do so, to deal with the question of the postage to India and our colonies, and to reduce all rates, by whatever route, to 2½d.—not ocean postage only, but postage by the quickest route. The existing rates to Australia, India, China, and the Cape range from 5d. to 6d., and the House is also aware that in the case of some of these letters they would be transmitted cheaper to their destination if they were posted abroad. No doubt it is a great anomaly that if letters are sent to Calais they can be posted to our officers at Quetta or in Burma more cheaply than if they were posted at a British post office. We propose, therefore, to remove these anomalies if we can persuade the other interested parties to join us, because we cannot act in this matter without the cordial co-operation of the colonies themselves. The ocean penny postage has been recommended very much on the ground that it would draw us closer to the colonies; but it would be a very unsatisfactory beginning to such a proceeding if we were to embark upon a cheapening of postage to which the colonies themselves were opposed. My right hon. Friend the Postmaster General will place himself in communication at once with the Agents of the colonies, and he will see, with every hope of success, whether they can be induced to reduce the postage in the future to 2½d. by whatever route the letters may be sent. The loss which would be incurred by this process would be £80,000 in the present year. It would be £105,000 in a complete year. But I think £80,000 will cover it in the present year, looking to the negotiations which will take place. Now, I intended to explain to the Committee how this loss would arise. But, looking to the ground which I have still to traverse, they will excuse me if I do not defend the proposal more than by making this statement. I can only say this: that we must assume this loss, because we cannot recoup ourselves on letters which go by the quickest route by any increased correspondence. We have to pay an amount equal to 1d. for the foreign transit, and the cost of the letter in this country and in the colonies or in India is taken to be even more than 1½d. Thus, if you add 1d. to the 1½d., the cost of the postage will be more than 2½d., or at least fully 2½d., and we can-

not expect to recoup ourselves. But I have little doubt that the Committee generally will be prepared to make this sacrifice out of Revenue for the purpose of removing anomalies and securing cheaper communication with India. India will also have to be consulted on the proposal. We are at present in communication with her on the subject. . . . . The first serious inroad which I propose to make on my surplus is a change involving the remission of the duty on gold and silver plate—a change which, I believe, has been expected, and I will not conçeal from myself that it is not pleasant for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to part with a tax which is paid with the greatest possible cheerfulness by those who have to pay it. There is a positive alacrity on the part of the chief members of the trade in paying the Plate Duties, and they are protesting in advance against their abolition, and I must, therefore, make out some case why we propose the abolition of these duties. The first shake was given to them by the Report of the Select Committee of 1878-9, of which I was myself a member. They recommended as follows:—That

> "Whenever the condition of the Revenue will permit the duty upon silver plate should be abolished."

The Committee were moved to make this recommendation by the consideration of the unequal incidence of the duty and the great proportion it bore (nearly 40 per cent.) to the raw material, and the importance of promoting the use of silver as an article of manufacture. The Indian community soon fastened on the suggestion of the Committee. I think myself that India has attached almost undue importance to the abolition of these duties. But the fact remains that they do attach enormous importance to the abolition of the Plate Duty. They consider it will have an effect upon the price of silver, and will enable them to send more articles of manufactured silver to this country, though I think they are rather sanguine in their expectations. It might be contended, and I have heard it argued, that we ought not to look to the wishes or expectations of India, but to British interests alone. But the argument had been rather cut away from under our feet by the recollection in India of a transaction which they consider to have been unfair to themselves, justly or unjustly I will not say. But they consider that the duty upon the imports of British cotton goods was promoted and carried rather with a view to British interests than to Indian interests, and they have made a kind of passionate claim in return that in this matter of Plate Duties we should consider the interests of India. Now, they have had a good deal to go upon with regard to declarations made by various Chancellors of the Exchequer. The abolition of the duty was recommended without hesitation by the recent Royal Commission upon Gold and Silver as a practical measure for diminishing the difficulties of India. It is difficult in the face of a recommendation of that kind, coming from a strong Commission, to resist that pressure. I mention it because, as I say, we must have strong arguments for the repeal of a duty, the repeal of which is opposed by the trade of silversmiths in England itself. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian handled the subject in 1881, and proposed to reduce the duties gradually. He would have preferred an immediate reduction, but he shrank from it on account of the drawback, which then was estimated to amount to £170,000. The right hon. Gentleman subsequently withdrew his proposal, but referred to the matter again the next year. From that time to this the matter has been in suspense. My right hon. Friend, speaking of this duty, said—

> "The state in which it was left perplexes the market, places transactions upon old plate on an embarrassed footing, inflicts much mischief and limitation on the industry, and possibly tends to lower the standard of our manufactured goods, whilst obstructing the taste in design."

With all these declarations before us, I said last year that I should wish to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission to abolish the Silver Plate Duty, but that I had no means at my command to make up for the loss and also to meet the demand on the drawback. Now that the moment has come, I consider we are practically bound, by all that has occurred in the past, to take the bull by the horns and to deal with the duty on this footing. Viceroys and ex-Viceroys have all attached the greatest importance to this matter; and it would create a serious disappointment in India if we were not to deal with the matter. But, it may be asked, if we propose the abolition of the duty on silver plate, why should we abolish the duty on gold plate? The duty on gold articles amounts to a very small sum. The House will be amused to learn that the greatest portion of the duty on gold plate is paid by wedding rings. Three-fourths and more of the duty, amounting to £23,300, on gold plate come from the duty paid by this most necessary article of civilised society. Otherwise gold plate is so small an item that, practically, no revenue whatever is derived from it. Nor would the question of drawback arise in the case of gold plate; and I propose no drawback. As regards silver plate, the amount of drawback involved I put at £120,000, which I add to the £80,000 we shall lose by the abolition of the Gold and Silver Plate Duties. The drawback used to be estimated at £170,000. But the uncertainty of the trade has prevented the accumulation of stocks, and I feel confident that £120,000 is a fair sum. But we do not propose to pay any amount of drawback which may be claimed. We shall take £120,000 as a maximum, and arrangements will then be made, which shall be stated later in detail, for paying the drawback on the stocks in the hands of dealers, provided they have not passed into use. I am told that it will be possible to get a perfect statement of the whole of the silver plate on which drawback may be claimed. If the claims should exceed £120,000, then a corresponding diminution will be made upon the drawback claimed, so that the sum which the State will have to pay shall in no case exceed £120,000. The Royal Commission said that we should not pay more than three years' drawback, and it will be seen that £120,000 is about two years' drawback upon silver plate, because the amount of Silver Plate Duty is about £60,000. I have now arrived at a point when I must attack the bulk of my subject. I trust that hon. Members will not feel that I have unduly trespassed upon their attention in explaining these smaller items of remission. I have, of course, to think not only of the audience listening to me now, but also of those outside who are interested in silver plate or any of the other matters which I have touched upon. They require a rather full statement, and I was therefore bound to make it, although it may be somewhat wearisome. I now come to the larger remissions. After deducting the barrack expenditure my surplus stands at £3,249,000. I have further disposed of £100,000 for Volunteers, £60,000 for reduced postage, and £200,000 for silver plate, leaving me in possession of £2,869,000, but after having read so much during a portion of this year about the gigantic sums that would be at my disposal, I confess that the proportions of that surplus appear to me to be very modest, when I have to set against this amount the number of claimants who have already put forward their claims to remission. There are the advocates of the abolition of the Tea Duty, but the abolition of that duty would mean a sacrifice of revenue of £4,900,000. Then someone spoke of a reduction of 2d. on the Income Tax. That would mean a sacrifice of £4,000,000. Then there are others who are not only anxious for a free breakfast table, but for free pudding as well, and who desire the abolition of the duty on all dried fruits. Then there are my friends who are interested in the brewing trade. They consider that they are entitled to the remission of the 3d. per barrel imposed last year. Then there are the County Councils, who ask that we should hand over to them the House Duty, there are other persons asking for this modest trifle of £2,000,000, and others suggesting that the whole of the duty should be remitted. Well, I ask, what is my surplus amongst so many? I will proceed to consider the various claims that may be met; but instead of approaching the task with the feeling that I am going to give satisfaction to any of the claimants, I feel that the amount to be divided is comparatively so small that I shall create much disappointment in apportioning it. I first turn to the question as between direct and indirect taxation. It has been suggested that the present Government have favoured more than they ought the payers of Income Tax. A right hon. Gentleman opposite considered that we had unduly favoured the payers of Income Tax by reducing the tax from 8d. to 6d., but I hold that in having done so we have simply restored the *status quo.*

The extra 2d. was imposed for a special purpose at a special time when there were special exigencies, and it should be remembered that at that time a proposal had been made to increase indirect taxation, which proposal was, however, withdrawn. Therefore, I consider that we have in no way altered the *status quo* as regards direct and indirect taxation or favoured direct taxation by the course which we have taken. Again, it must be remembered that we imposed an additional duty, the Estate Duty, upon real and personal property. Looking, then, at all the circumstances I do not think that we have altered the *status quo* Hon. Members may ask, what is the opinion that ought to be held with regard to the *status quo* before these reductions of taxation and these increases of taxation take place? That is a speculative question which would lead us very far afield, and on which there might be very great differences of opinion. I approach the question in a simpler fashion, and ask myself how the surplus of this year has mainly been produced. Has it been produced mainly by the increase of direct taxation, or by the increase of sources of indirect taxation? When the subject is considered from that point of view, it will be seen that we owe the greater portion of the surplus to the increased consumption of articles which pay duty and contribute towards indirect taxation. Out of the sum which remains to me, nearly £2,000,000 has been yielded by indirect taxation, and the Government have determined as indirect taxation has mainly produced the surplus, that mainly to the relief of indirect taxation shall the surplus go. Now, the surplus has been mainly produced by the consumers of alcoholic beverages, but no man in the House would be prepared to say that they should be relieved. The sum which they have contributed, which amounts, after deductions, to about £1,500,000, we propose to apply to the reduction of the duty upon tea by 2d. in the pound. The tipplers shall relieve tea. The loss upon the Tea Duty will amount to £1,500,000. I know that it has been said that a reduction of 2d. will not benefit the consumer; but I am not prepared to admit that argument. We have to look to our own responsibility, and we must bear in mind that a duty of 6d. upon tea represents a very large proportion of the primary cost of the article. If tea were sold to the consuming classes at anything like the cost price, it would appear at once what an enormous relief would be given by a reduction of 2d. in the pound. But the amount of the relief is concealed by the fact that the middleman walks away with so large a proportion of the price which is paid by the working classes for their tea. In many villages the working classes pay as much as 2s., as 2s. 6d., even as 3s. for tea, while much tea can be bought at a cost price, 11d. or 1s. If you take the price at 1s. 6d., a price at which good tea can be bought and sold, and realise that from that price you are going to make a reduction of 2d., you will see that you are conferring an appreciable boon upon the consumer. It would be very satisfactory if full advantage could be taken of this reduction by consumers, so that they should receive their full share of the relief. Let them, therefore, consider whether through better organisation, or by other means, it may not be possible for them to buy on better terms this article of primary necessity, this article so important to the whole of the working classes. I will here frankly say that I am opposed to the total abolition of the Tea Duties. There is no doubt that tea is the one article through which those who neither smoke nor drink contribute to the Revenue, and therefore I think it right that a Tea Duty should be maintained; and I should, besides, be sorry to think that we were going to cut off altogether any of the sources of our Revenue. But looking at the way in which the surplus has been created, and bearing in mind the circumstances to which I shall have to call attention hereafter, I think that justice demands the application of this portion of the surplus in the manner which I have indicated.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): . . . Everyone will rejoice that the duty on tea is to be reduced, but no one supposes, I imagine, that the reduction of the duty on tea will stop at 2d. in the pound. This can only be looked upon as a commencement of dealing with the Tea Duty. . . .

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): . . . I am sorry to learn from the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that, in spite of the earnest protests of all the leading firms in the silver trade, he has decided to take off the duty which was at once a source of Revenue and a great preventitive, I am assured on all hands, of fraud upon the purchaser. I very much doubt if anyone will thank him except one well-known dealer, who has agitated this question for a great many years, and, possibly some Indian exporters of silver.

MR. GOSCHEN: I made one great omission in my speech, which I regret. I ought to have spoken upon the subject of hall marking, which is mixed up with the Silver Duty. When I come to reply I will deal with the matter, but I may inform my hon. and gallant Friend and the Committee that we do not propose to abolish the compulsory system of hall-marking.

***MR. HOWARD VINCENT**: If the right hon. Gentleman assures the Committee that the matter of compulsory hall-marking, to which the trade attaches enormous importance, and upon the maintenance of which it is unanimous, will not be dealt with, I will not proceed further into that question. But, as regards the duty, I should like to say a few words. I do not hesitate to once more call the attention of the House to the fact that every prominent manufacturer in the country is, so far as I have been able to learn, against the abolition of the duty. The silver trade is a flourishing industry. The statistics regarding it prove this, and a recent Parliamentary Return shows that there is a vast increase in the quantity of silver upon which duty was paid in 1886-87, as compared with the year 1879-80. In London the increase was from 442,000 ounces to 535,000 ounces. In Birmingham the increase was from 75,000 ounces to 122,000 ounces. In Sheffield the increase was from 73,598 ounces to 162,852 ounces, or more than double. There has also been an increase in the quantity of silver exported, and upon which drawback has been allowed in London, from 73,000 ounces in 1879-80, to 101,000 ounces in 1886-87. In value, the increase has been over 75 per cent. The only thing which has held the trade back in recent years has been the perpetual agitation in favour of an upheaval of the system which has worked well, an agitation which has disorganised trade to a very large extent. Let me mention what the duties are. First of all, there is the duty upon gold plate, which is not compulsory, of 17s. 6d. per ounce, and that, I understand from my right hon. Friend, is not to be touched. Secondly, there is a duty of 1s. 6d. an ounce upon silver plate, which is compulsory. Thirdly, there is a countervailing duty upon gold and silver plate imported into the United Kingdom, equal to the Excise Duty, and lastly, there are the licences to sell gold and silver plate. My right hon. Friend has not stated whether he proposes to do away with these licences. I trust he intends to do so; the trade confidently expect he will do so if the duty upon silver plate is abolished. These sources of Revenue have produced to the Exchequer, on an average, as I gather, upwards of £130,000 a year, or, in round figures, £72,000 Excise Duty, £10,000 Import Duty, and £48,000 from licences. Will anybody thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for taking away this considerable source of national income? Mr. Edward Watherston may do so, but there are, indeed, few others. In 1883 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he thought he would abolish these duties, but so strong was the opposition of the trade that, on the 17th of April, 1883, my right hon. Friend and Colleague, the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), wrote to us—

> "The Government definitely abandon the proposal to repeal the duties upon silver plate."

Upon this subject 19 of the largest firms in the country addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 18th of December, 1888, a Memorial, in which they said:—

> "The agitation for the remission of these duties does not proceed from the public or the trade at large, but from a very unimportant minority, who have next to no interest at stake, and we, the representatives of firms who pay more than four-fifths of the whole duty, desire to protest against the representations constantly made by these agitators as being far from true."

Similarly, the Sheffield traders last year memorialised the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the effect that—

> "The majority decline to believe that the repeal of the duties on silver will stimulate the purchase of silver plate; that the tax falls almost entirely upon a a class well able to bear it, and from which no urgent demand for its repeal has arisen."

There is also the question of drawback. I understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes that only two years' drawback should be paid to the trade, estimated at about, I think he said, £120,000 or £130,000. I feel convinced of this, that two years' drawback will by no means satisfy the trade. There are considerable stocks on hand upon which it is only fair that, if the duty is abolished, drawback should be paid in full. To give only two years' drawback would be impolitic and unfair to the trade. I need not press further upon the arguments. I have already detailed them, and they have appeared in the Press, and been endorsed by 54 of the leading manufacturers of silver plate in Sheffield and London, and by the principal firm in Birmingham. These firms pay seven-eighths of the duty which is now to be remitted, and they beg the House to leave the Silver Duty and the compulsory hall-marking unaltered. I am glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he does not propose to touch the compulsory hall-marking, to which the silver trade throughout the country attach the very utmost importance; but I fear that now the duty is abolished, the apprehensions of some, that it will be exceedingly difficult to retain compulsory hall-marking, will be realised. In conclusion, I will only say that, despite the brilliant and popular Budget laid before the Committee by the right hon. Gentleman, I cannot help saying that I hope the time will come when he, or succeeding Chancellors of the Exchequer, will lay before the British House of Commons Budgets which will deal, to use the right hon. Gentleman's own phrase, with British interests alone, and seek alone to encourage British manufacturer and production.

*Mr. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): . . . I am very glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman proposes to abolish the duty on silver plate. A portion of the present duty is absolutely protective, because 1s. 6d. per oz. is charged on all foreign imported silver plate, while only 1s. 3d. per. oz. is charged on plate of British manufacture. I am glad, too, to find that the compulsory hall-marking is to be retained, because the charge is exceedingly small, and it prevents unscrupulous dealers from deceiving the public, and so injuring the whole trade. That is a kind of dealing which was practised when hall-marking of gold chains was not made compulsory, and it was said, I remember, that a copper coal scuttle and half a sovereign would make a goldsmith's stock of gold chains. But the tendency of modern legislation is in favour of protecting the public from adulteration, either in food or in the material of the goods they buy. On the other hand, I do not see why there should not be some modification in the hall-marking of silver plate. It is done in the marking of gold. You can hall-mark gold at 22, 18, 15, 12, and even 9 carats; why should not manufacturers be allowed to hall-mark different qualities of silver? Why not have in addition to our present standard of hall-marking at 925 the Indian standard of 916, the French standard of 900, the German of 800, for it is found that the lower qualities are more durable in wear? An arrangement of this kind would remove a great hardship. It sometimes happens that a work of art in silver of high artistic merit is sent to be hall-marked, and if it does not happen to come up to the standard of 925 this beautiful piece of workmanship is liable to be broken up whereas if a modification were allowed, it could be marked at a lower standard. . . .

SIR R. FOWLER (London): . . . Now I am going to give utterance to what I am afraid will be an unpopular sentiment. I certainly listened with great regret to one part of the Budget, and that was in relation to the duty on tea. I cannot but feel it is a very serious thing to take away a permanent source of revenue. The Tea Duty is not a heavy burden; it is a revenue that comes in very easily. Of course, the expenses of collecting the duty will remain the same, whether the tax is 4d. or 6d., and I do not suppose the right hon. Gentleman anticipates any increase in consumption. I must say that I think that to reduce a source of revenue that brought in a large amount with little trouble is an important step, and a step which I—though I know not many will agree with me—regard with regret.

*(9.9.) SIR R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I desire, Sir, as one who has some claim to speak on behalf of our fellow-subjects in India to express to the right hon Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer my deep satisfaction at the announcement he has made of the intended abolition of the duties on silver plate, an announcement which I am sure will be received with much gratification throughout the length and breadth of that country. I am quite certain that the action of the Government with regard to this matter will be hailed by the people of India as a distinct mark of the sympathy felt in this country for its greatest Dependency. Like the quality of mercy, this remission will be twice blessed—it will be blessed to the country that gives it, and also to the country that receives it. On the one hand it will undoubtedly quicken the silver export trade of India, while it will encourage the art manufacture of silver in that country; but, on the other hand, beyond this it will multiply for us in this country those beautiful objects of art which are manufactured in India, and which, in the present state of metallic art in this country, cannot be produced here, and which, in fact, can only be manufactured by the Indian artificer. Furthermore, it will tend *pro tanto* to re-habilitate silver, at least to a certain extent, and thus will tend to afford relief to the agricultural and other interests of this country which are naturally affected by the appreciation of gold. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has alluded to the opposition which has been offered in anticipation of this remission of taxation by the traders of Sheffield, and some other centres of the silversmiths' art in England. These manufacturers fear to meet the competition of the Indian artificers in their own trade, but I venture to submit that their fear is based on an entire misapprehension. The silver manufacture of India is entirely unique, being mainly composed of filagree work, grotesque and otherwise, requiring very laborious hand labour, of a kind certainly not likely to be carried on to any large extent by the silversmiths of this country. Having said this I should like to pass to another part of the right hon. Gentleman's Statement, which deals with a subject of vital importance to the people of India, and that is the proposed remission of the duty on tea. I feel bound to say, as being myself a proprietor of tea gardens in Ceylon, that the Indian and Ceylon tea industry will not gain, but will rather lose, by the proposed remission of duty, because it is probably not understood in England that the remission of duty will act, to a certain extent, as a bounty or premium on the low-priced China teas, and to that extent we should be discouraging the growth of the superior and higher-priced Indian and Ceylon teas. But my right hon. Friend foreshadows that the Empire will gain by the proposed remission of taxation. He puts it that the consumers may possibly gain 2d. per pound by the remission. I hope they may; but I doubt whether they will gain anything like that amount. I am afraid that a good deal of it will stick to the middleman on the way. Nevertheless, that the consumer may possibly gain something I am free to confess, and I would sooner see my working-class friends giving up their gin and other alcoholic drinks, and taking to tea, even if they took to the low-priced and inferior brands of China. I consider the Budget of my right hon. Friend is distinctly a temperance Budget, and as such I hail it most heartily. The provision which is made by the right hon. Gentleman under which the County Councils will be able to control the supply of temptations to drink is, in my opinion, a most statesmanlike provision. The local veto has hitherto, as we all know, generally been hampered by this dilemma, that it involved a heavy local expenditure, in order, in the exercise of that veto, to stop the supply of temptations to intemperance; or, on the other hand, it meant the distinct robbing of the licensed victuallers, by depriving them of their licences without any compensation whatever. Well, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman's proposals clearly postulate the principle of compensation to those whose licences are to be taken away from them. That, in my opinion, is the only principle which is compatible with national honesty. It is the principle which was laid down in the

most emphatic manner by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, in the published letter which he addressed some years ago to a licensed victualler in my own constituency of North Kensington, and it is a principle that I trust this House will maintain. The proposals of the right hon. Gentleman will at once, and perceptibly, reduce the number of licensed houses. It may be said, in fact, that this Budget of my right hon. Friend greases the wheels of temperance, whilst it acts honourably and justly by the licensed victuallers, and to every other class of the community, and as such, Sir, I hail it with the utmost enthusiasm.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) : . . . I am not complaining of the reductions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes. It is true that the working classes will be benefited by the reduction of the duty on tea, but is that not a remission that affects the rich in greater proportion? I believe the reduction in postage will affect our merchants and trading classes very much more than the working classes. Every mercantile house in the City of London will send a hundred letters for every one sent by a member of the working classes. The idea is excellent in itself, and although the Chancellor of the Exchequer is making provision for a deficit which may arise from the reduction, there can be no doubt that, in a very short time, that reduction, instead of diminishing the amount of Revenue, will tend to increase it. I do not at all despair of seeing a penny ocean postage, although I know that every Treasury is opposed to Postal reductions. The contributions from that Service are getting almost beyond reasonable bounds, and more should be done to develop cheap postage. I rose mainly to say a few words as to the abolition of the Silver Duty. I congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on having the courage to abolish that duty and deal with that subject, and I hope and trust that his effort will not be abortive. I trust that this time we shall get rid of the Silver Duty. My hon. Friend and Colleague the Member for the Central Division of Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent) is anxious to maintain the duty in the interest of the British manufacturer, as he believes. The idea is, that to impose a duty of 40 per cent. on the manufactured article is to encourage home manufacture. Nothing can be more absurd. It is the old idea the paper-makers and others entertained, but the very reverse of that which they feared has always been found to be the case. We have always found that when the Protective Duties have been swept away the home manufactures have extended year by year. I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the course he has taken, but I do not know what he is going to do as to compulsory hall-marking. He advanced as one of the reasons for the abolition of the duty, that he was only doing justice to the fair claims of India. In that I quite agree, but you cannot have one uniform standard of compulsory hall-marking. You must allow some kind of elasticity, so that the standard adopted by India or any other country that may import silver will allow for the admission of manufactured silver into this country. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman recognises that something must be done in that direction, so as to admit the articles he contemplates admitting by the abolition of the Silver Duties. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has reduced the Tea Duty, although he has been criticised on his own side for doing so. One of his supporters deprecated the "abandonment" of so important a source of Revenue. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman is abandoning a source of Revenue at all; on the contrary, I think he is taking means to increase it. I have always felt that the reduction of duty has, within a certain time, compensated for itself by an increase in the consumption. I think we all agree that the price at which tea is sold to the poorer classes is most excessive. When the duties on sugar were reduced, it was found that the taking of a penny off meant a great deal more than the penny itself in the reduction of the price at which the article was sold. The public get better acquainted with the net value of the article, which is dealt in with much more freedom as soon as reduction takes place. I believe, therefore, that this is the first step towards a very considerable reduction in the cost of it to the people. I do not believe it is the last step by any means. Having reduced the duty by 2d., I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not remain there, but that he will have to go further, and the duty will probably be entirely swept away. . . .

*Mr. GOSCHEN: There are a great many points on which I am asked to reply, and I will try to do so as briefly as possible. . . . Then I turn for a moment to the Tea Duty, upon which much has been said. One hon. Member objects to the reduction of the Tea Duty, and would rather, he says, have had assisted education. But if the reduction of the Tea Duty should be followed by assisted education, I think he would have no cause to complain, for then he would have the advantage of a reduction of the Tea Duty one year and the advantage of assisted education would be realised in the next year. But my hon. Friend behind me (Sir R. Fowler) complains of the manner in which the Tea Duty has been dealt with, on the ground that we are parting with a permanent source of Revenue. But we have not parted with it, and we do not intend to do so. By putting the duty at 4d. there will be a chance, if we should ever have to make a special effort, of calling upon the consumers to contribute something to that special effort. If we treat it, on the one hand, as a permanent source of Revenue, but at the same time put it, if I may say so, on a peace footing by reducing it considerably, we retain it as a source of Imperial Revenue, as I, for one, desire to retain it. Here is a short letter which I have received on the subject, which amused and interested me very much, and which I think is genuine:—

> "Sir,—Being a non smoker and a non-drinker, not eligible for Income or Property Tax, not able to stand coffee drinking, but withal a patriot though a Radical, I would like to know how I am going to stand my 'corner' in regard to the expenses of my country if I do not pay something through my teacup, if you take off the Tea Duty."

I call that a sensible letter. I have not—but not in consequence of that letter—taken off the whole of the Tea Duty. I place it at 4d. I keep it as a source of Revenue, a national reserve, and though some hon. Members may wish to abolish it altogether, I protest earnestly against diminishing too much the number of our sources of Revenue. My theory is that having reached a certain point, though we may remit when we can in order to lighten the general burden, we should keep what I may call the skeletons of our regiments intact, so that, to quote the writer of the letter, every man should be able to stand his "corner." . . There is one point I have to mention in connection with the change in the duty on silver plate. I omitted to state that while we shall leave the law as to hall-marking practically in the state in which it now stands, we shall make special arrangements in regard to India. India exports to this country her manufactured silver, and, generally, I think, that silver is of the same standard as her rupee, and somewhat below the standard adopted in this country. We propose that the Indian goods shall be specially hall-marked and shall be allowed to be imported at the Indian standard. We propose also that the Indian Government shall be allowed to establish assay offices for this purpose, and certified by Indian authority that they are up to standard, Indian silver goods will be allowed to be imported here. In this way I hope we shall satisfy India. In other respects we do not propose to interfere with arrangements under the existing law, or change the practice as to hall-marking. . . . With regard to the Tea Duty, it was proposed that the reduction should come into operation on an after May 1. Sometimes a longer period has been given; but I am led to believe that stocks have been rather exhausted, and the date I mention I think will be convenient to all concerned. . . .

*(11.46.) Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I shall wish, at the proper time, to take a Division on the question of the Tea Duty.

PLATE DUTIES.

5. Resolved, That, from and after the thirtieth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, the Stamp Duties and the Duties of Customs now payable on Plate of Gold and Plate of Silver shall cease to be payable, and the Drawback now payable upon the exportation of Plate shall cease to be allowed; and in respect of Plate of Silver manufactured in the United Kingdom, which has not left the stock of any manufacturer or other licensed dealer in Plate, an allowance, by way of Drawback, shall be made out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof, subject to (amongst other provisions) the provisions following (that is to say):—

(a) Every licensed dealer in Plate who is entitled to make any claim for allowance shall, on or before the seventh day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, give notice of his intention to make such claim upon a form to be immediately provided and delivered to him by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue;

(b) If the aggregate number of ounces of Plate of Silver, in respect of which claims are sent in and proved to be valid and correct, is not such that the amount required to repay the Duties paid thereon would exceed the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, the whole of such Duties shall be repaid, but, if otherwise, that sum shall be distributed rateably amongst the claimants according to the number of ounces in respect whereof each of them has established his claim.

TEA.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in lieu of the Duty of Customs now chargeable upon Tea, there shall be charged and paid, on and after the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, the Duty following, and such Duty shall continue to be charged and paid upon Tea imported into Great Britain and Ireland until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one (that is to say):

Tea . . . . the pound . Four Pence."
—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

MR. PICTON: This is a proposal to alter a duty which has been in existence for a very long time, and I think the Committee ought to have a full opportunity of discussing it.

MR. GOSCHEN: That opportunity will be afforded on the Report. The date fixed for the remission is the 1st of May, which is not very far ahead, and it is important that the trade should know what it has to expect.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: I think, under the circumstances, this Motion ought not to be pressed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Friday, April 18, 1890.

HALL MARKING OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the compulsory hall marking of gold and silver plate shall continue, in the interests of the public, and of honesty of manufacture, regulations will be framed, notwithstanding the remission of the duty, to provide for the British hall marking of imported plate?

*MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): Why is it that imported foreign silver plate is not required to be marked? Why should it be treated in a different way from gold watch cases and other articles that are imported, and why should it not be marked with different standards?

*MR. GOSCHEN: I am not prepared to answer the questions of the hon. Member for Whitechapel (Mr. Montagu). In regard to the question of the hon. and gallant Member behind me (Mr. H. Vincent), it is our intention to retain the present system of compulsory hall marking for foreign imported silver plate, subject to the remarks which I made yesterday as to the hall marking of Indian plate at the rupee standard.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: As the Government deprived me of the opportunity of raising this very question early in the Session, will the right hon. Gentleman give me an opportunity of making a representation to him of the objections felt to compulsory hall marking, especially as affecting Indian silver?

*MR. GOSCHEN: If the hon. Gentleman wishes to make a representation, either formal or informal, I will give him every consideration; but the hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity of being heard if any change of legislation is required in consequence of the abolition of the Plate Duty.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

BI-METALLISM.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire) In moving the Resolution of which I have given notice, I ask the indulgence of the House while I try to lay before it, as succinctly as I can, a very intricate and at the same, a very important question. The subject was discussed last year briefly and inadequately, and I raise it now in order that we may have a more exhaustive debate and that I may take the sense of the House upon it. To show the keen interest felt in it, I may say that no fewer than 140 Petitions had been presented to the House in favour of my proposal from many of the most important industial centres of the Kingdom, from chambers of commerce and chambers of agriculture, from working men's societies, and various industrial interests, and the signatures attached amount to no fewer than 60,000. For the sake of clearness I will divide the subject into three heads —first, the advantage of the old bi-metallic system of Europe; secondly, the evils which arose from its rupture; and thirdly, the practicability and desirability of re-establishing it. The custom of mankind since the origin of civilisation has been to use gold and silver alike as standard money tied together by a ratio fixed by law. This ratio did not vary much from 10 or 11 of silver to 1 of gold, or as 11 to 1 under the Greek and Roman Empires, and during the Middle Ages down to the discovery of America, it remained very steady. For nearly 2,000 years silver was the money of the world. Then, owing to the enormous supplies of silver from the mines of Potosi, it gradually altered in the course of a century to 15 to 1, at which it continued with little alteration for 200 years prior to 1873. So steady was the ratio that the Royal Commission on the Currency, which reported two years ago, unanimously stated (page 2)—

> "From the middle of the 17th century the relative value of the two metals did not vary much more than 3 per cent in either direction until the recent divergence began to manifest itself in 1873."

We have frequently had, in a single year, since 1873, greater variations between gold and silver than in the whole 200 years before that date, and it must be obvious that a totally new influence has come into play. Let me point out the distinction that existed between the bi-metallism that prevailed before this century, and that which came into force in France from 1803 to 1873. The old bi-metallism of Europe was a very rude and unscientific system. There was no unity of action among the nations; each adopted and changed its ratio at will; one nation had 15 to 1; another, like England in the last century, had 15·21 to 1, as fixed by Sir Isaac Newton in 1717; others had 14¾ to 1, and so on. Silver was the principal money, and gold was rated to it; besides there was no open Mints, with unlimited coinage of either metal, which is the absolute condition of effective bi-metallism. The various countries coined a certain amount of either metal as suited them, and each metal naturally gravitated to the centres where it was most highly valued. No doubt many and great inconveniences resulted from this form of bi-metallism, yet it gave the world the inestimable advantage of keeping both metals in circulation at very nearly a fixed par of exchange. The second period of bi-metallism was the French system from 1803 to 1873, which was far more scientific, and far more successful in binding the two metals together. The ratio adopted was 15½ to 1, and so successful was that system in preventing fluctuations, that the extreme variation in the London Market between the metals in 70 years was from 15·21 to 15·90, and these variations are easily accounted for by the fact that England became a gold using country by the Act of 1816, and when silver was wanted for export to India it had to be imported from France at a considerable cost of transit, insurance and other exchange charges. These charges fully explain the slight fluctuations in the London market. There must also be borne in mind the extraordinary strain to which the French system was put during these 70 years. In the early part of that period the yield of gold was extremely small, say £2,000,000 a year against £6,000,000, of silver. England resumed specie payments in 1821, and so drained the Continent of gold, and there were times when a small premium on gold was charged in France for export, very seldom going as high as 1 per cent. or 2 per cent. Then came the gold discoveries of California and Australia, which raised the yield of gold to £30,000,000 annually against £8,000,000 of silver, and in 20 years doubled the gold supply of the world, yet the ratio remained unchanged. The French system acted as an equalising machine, and the vast supply of gold was diffused through the world without disturbing the relative values of the metals. In 1865 a combination of States joined France, and formed what is called the Latin Union, under similar conditions of coinage. Can anyone doubt that the French system saved Europe from a violent dislocation of gold and silver at the time of the Californian and Australian gold discoveries. If gold had then been demonetised to the extent that silver has recently been demonetised, we should have seen just as heavy a fall in gold measured by silver as we have recently seen in silver measured by gold. The ratio would have gone to 10 to 1 in place of remaining at 15½ to 1. We should have seen gold debts lightened and silver debts enhanced, just as we have recently seen gold debts enhanced and silver debts lightened. Can anyone doubt that the maintainance of the French system was an enormous gain to the cause of justice and fair play, as well as to international commerce. This country reaped all the advantages of bi-metallism, though mono-metallic itself; it had only to send its gold to Paris and get silver; or send silver and get gold, and so it could carry on its trade with India and China and South America as safely as if they all had identical money. We had virtually a par of exchange all the world over, to the enormous advantage of this country, the chief trader with the silver-using countries. I know that the great objection brought against our plan is that we attempt to do what is impossible. It is alleged that we are trying to tie together by law two commodities which constantly vary both in extent and cost of production. We are constantly told that the law can no more fix the ratio between gold and silver than between coal and iron, or between wheat and barley. I reply that the experience of the French system proves that the thing can be done in spite of the greatest fluctuations in supply ever known in the history of the world. And the reason is this: Monetary Law constitutes the chief demand for the precious metals. The tastes or desires of individual consumers constitute the demand for other commodities, but the Mint is the chief demand for either gold or silver. If the leading nations close their Mints against gold, it goes down relatively to silver; if they close their Mints against silver it goes down relatively to gold; if they keep open large bi-metallic Mints, with unlimited coinage of both metals at a fixed ratio, they virtually fix that ratio for the whole world. The finding of the Royal Commission on this head is clear and unanimous. They say:—

> "Now undoubtedly the date which forms the dividing line between an epoch of approximate fixity in the relative value of Gold and Silver and one of marked instability is the year when the bi-metallic system which had previously been in force in the Latin Union ceased to be in full operation; and we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that the operation of that system, established as it was in countries the population and commerce of which were considerable, exerted a material influence upon the relative value of the two metals. So long as that system was in force, we think that, notwithstanding the changes in the production and use of the precious metals, it kept the market price of silver approximately steady at the ratio fixed by law between them, namely, 15½ to 1."

That is the finding of the Commission, presided over by Lord Herschell, and signed by my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of London (Sir J. Lubbock). I cannot imagine how any fair-minded person who has studied the evidence can come to any other conclusion. Nothing more clearly illustrates the inveterate prejudice of the banking and financial class on this subject than their refusal to admit for many years that the French system had anything to do with the stability between gold and silver prior to 1873. I freely grant that there are some things which the law cannot do; it cannot fix the value of the precious metals as compared with other commodities. That depends upon many things, one of which is the supply of the precious metals. In the Middle Ages so scarce was that supply that a quarter of wheat sometimes sold at five shillings, and labourers' wages were two shillings per week. Then the discovery of the South American mines took place in the 16th century, and a great flood of the precious metals went through Europe, and prices rose fourfold. Again, after the gold discoveries in California and Australia, when once more a great flood of the precious metals flowed over Europe, prices rose 40 per cent., and I would especially call the attention of the hon. Member for Leeds to this fact, and also to the fact that this occurred simultaneously with a great reduction in the cost of production, owing to such modern inventions as railways, steam boats, and telegraphs. According to all ordinary laws, prices ought to have fallen, but instead of that they steadily rose, with occasional fluctuations, until, in 1873, they were 40 per cent. higher than they were in 1848. Then, I would ask attention to this fact. There followed a strain on gold and the demonetisation of silver, and prices kept falling for 15 years until they got below the point at which they stood in 1848. Articles have been written in the magazines to prove that the whole fall in prices is due to the fact of the "discovery of economising expedients—better machinery. I would ask the House why prices steadily rose for 25 years to the extent of 40 per cent., whilst the modern economising systems of production were in operation — how came it that the values governed by gold and silver rose under these economising processes? The House must feel the force of this query. All that the law can do is to give monetary power to gold alone, or to silver alone, or tie both together under a bi-metallic system. Now, let me ask the House to look at the advantages of the old bi-metallic system. We are the great traders with the silver-using countries, which contain a population of nine hundred millions of people. They are our best customers, because they have light duties and few manufactures of their own; they need capital to develop them, we have it to spare; they are constant borrowers in the London market, and so long as gold and silver were tied together they could safely borrow, with interest payable in gold, because they always knew that a certain amount of silver would exchange against a fixed amount of gold. India borrowed largely under this system, and a vast amount of private capital was invested in all these countries, and no inconvenience was caused until the bi-metallic system was abandoned in 1873 I may mention that the exports from the United Kingdom ran up, under that system, from £63,000,000 in 1849 to £255,000,000 in 1873, from which they fell back to £212,000,000 in 1886, and last year recovered to £248,000,000. We had no trouble with the finances of India up to that date, whereas the House knows well that since that time we have had endless deficits and the greatest difficulties." I think I have proved my first point, that the old bi-metallic system worked well for the whole world, but especially for England, the great trader with the silver-using countries. Now let me deal with the second point, namely, the evils that arose from the rupture of the bi-metallic system. It is not necessary to remind the House of the intolerable depression of trade that set in about 1874, when the Mints of France and the Latin Union were practically closed to the coinage of silver. This depression lasted, almost without interruption, till 1887. It was accompanied by an enormous fall of prices, say 30 to 40 per cent., bringing up to the lowest level known in this century; and it produced immense suffering in nearly all our industrial centres, and among the agricultural population. Wages and profits alike fell greatly. Vast numbers of workmen were thrown out of employment—estimated at one time to reach 700,000 men. Our social system was more severely strained than at any time since 1848. The Commission on the Depression of Trade collected a vast mass of evidence on the subject, and recommended that a Special Commission should investigate the monetary aspect of the question, believing that that had much to do with it. The result was that the Commission on the Currency was appointed, which has produced a most valuable Report, and which is largely confirmatory of our opinions. Now, I wish to call the attention of the House to the singular fact that the fall of prices and the fall of silver proceeded almost *pari passu;* and the years of the heaviest depression of silver were the years of the heaviest depression in trade. There can be no doubt that these two phenomena were closely connected. Silver fell, as measured by gold, 30 per cent. to the lowest point, and commodities to about 35 per cent.; but all silver-using countries escaped this depression. Prices in them remained unchanged, and commerce went on as before. When the trade of our country was dwindling in value year by year, that of India was increasing by leaps and bounds. All other gold-using countries suffered similarly; in all there was intense depression, great social discontent, much increase of Socialism, a falling Revenue, and an increase of protection. I wish especially to call attention to this fact, as some persons try to stigmatise our course as secretly favouring Protection. I assert that the great fall in prices in gold-using countries, caused by the demonetisation of silver, enormously increased the sentiment in favour of Protection, and caused a great increase in Import Duties in France, Germany, Russia and Italy, of late years. The policy of the Bi-metallic Party undoubtedly makes for Free Trade. And now I would allude to another point. I would ask attention to a matter I dealt with last year when we debated this subject—and I repeat myself because I see hon. Members present who were not here during the former debate. I may be permitted to touch again on the matter to which I refer, because it lies almost at the root of our contention. I say that the demonetisation of silver was a commercial injustice to the debtor class in all gold-using countries. The creditor class were favoured by the appreciation of gold and the depreciation of silver. Is the House aware of the heavy burden under which the trade of this country is carried on? I do not think many people are aware of it, but I have taken pains for years past to ascertain what the charges upon our trade and commerce really are, and I put it that the trade of this country is carried on, under a vast burden of fixed charges, payable in gold, amounting certainly to not less than £150,000,000 a year, and probably as much as £200,000,000 a year. These include national and local debts, mortgages, ground rents, mining royalties, railway debentures and preference shares, long leases, annuities, pensions, &c. The purchasing power of gold, even after the recent revival of trade, is about 40 per cent. greater than it was in 1873; that is to say, 40 per cent. more of the products of human industry have to be sold to raise the money needful to meet these charges. This is a tax levied by the drones on the working bees of society, and surely it cannot be for the well-being of society to add to the incomes of the idle non-producing class, at the cost of the toiling masses. I hold that one-half of this extra burden is the result of the demonetisation of silver. There are about equal amounts of gold and silver in circulation; had these metals continued to be tied together by the Bi-metallic Law of 15½ to 1, the fall of prices would have been equally diffused over both gold- and silver-using countries, and the fall of prices in gold-using countries would have been just half of what it has been. The creditor class, the wealthy bondholders, money lenders, mortgagees, &c., would have lost one-half of their unearned increment, which would have remained in the pockets of the working industrial class, who constitute 90 per cent. of the nation. This one-half cannot be put at less than £30,000,000 a year. In fact, there is much reason to suspect that there was a kind of conspiracy among the financial class in Europe and America to get altogether rid of silver, as full valued money, in order to increase the value of gold, in which their Revenues were paid. There arose, simultaneously, a cry for the demonetisation of silver in Germany, France, the United States, and England, from 1870 to 1878. It was advocated by the newspapers in the interest of the financial class. Their aim was to bring about a universal gold standard; they calculated on the ignorance of the masses about all monetary questions, and very nearly succeeded, for a time, in what I could only call a nefarious plot. In America they succeeded, by a kind of trick, in demonetising silver for a short time; but the American people were too shrewd to be long hood-winked; they insisted on silver being re-monetised, and they have wisely coined and put into circulation, in the shape of silver certificates, about £70,000,000, and so greatly relieved the strain on gold, the ratio being 16 to 1. Within the past few days a Bill has passed the Committee of both Houses of the Legislature enormously increasing the coinage of silver, and requiring the Government to coin, not $2,000,000 monthly, but $4,500,000, with the result of causing a great rise in the price of silver. The American people thoroughly understand that the contracting of the money supply of the country makes only in the interest of the fixed investment classes. Our object is to make our people understand the subject as well as the Americans—and when they do so, we shall find that whatever the House may arrive at as to our proposal to-day it will then respond heartily to the proposition we make. I believe that it is largely owing to the efforts of the Bi-metallic Party that the tendency to demonetise silver has been checked, and a gigantic fraud against civilisation has not been fully consummated. The agitation which we have carried on has made the masses understand that their interest lies in a full circulation of money, not in a contracted one. It has made them understand that the contraction of the currency makes only, as I say, for the interest of the fixed investment class, and is opposed to the well-being of the whole nation. I claim in support of my views the great authority of the Currency Commission. They put in the clearest light the immensely increased strain put on gold at the time when silver was demonetised; they point out that just at that time the new requirements for the United States, Germany, Italy, and other countries to fill up their circulation with gold caused a demand for £200,000,000 sterling. At that time the whole production of gold in the world was only £20,000,000 a year, of which one-half was used up in the arts: that is to say, only £10,000,000 was available annually for purposes of coinage, and to meet this sudden demand for £200,000,000. This was the moment chosen to demonetise silver, just when there was a great scarcity of gold. Need we wonder that gold was appreciated in value, just as silver was depreciated? Its supply obeyed the laws of all commodities; as the supply fell off and the demand increased it rose in value, but the increased demand was largely the product of unjust and unwise legislation, which excluded silver from the joint work it had hitherto discharged along with gold, and artificially raised one metal and lowered the other. The operation of this principle is clearly explained by Professor Thorold Rogers, in these words:—

> "It will be clear that just as a very great fall would take place in the value of existing stocks of gold were this metal absolutely demonetised, so *e converso* a considerable rise would occur in its comparative value if in the economical history of any community, or rather of a large number of communities, gold were increasingly adopted as a measure of value and a means for carrying on commerce."

All the best economists maintain the advantage to mankind of a full supply of money, and the evil of its artificial contraction. The historian, Hume, writes—

> "We find that in every kingdom into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly everything takes a new face. Labour and industry gain life, the merchant becomes more enterprising, the manufacturer more diligent and skilful, and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention."

McCulloch wrote—

> "Though like a fall of rain after a long course of dry weather an increase of the precious metals may be prejudicial to certain classes, it is beneficial to an incomparably greater number, including all who are actively engaged in industrial pursuits, and is, speaking generally, of great public and national advantage."

Chevalier says—

> "Such a change will benefit those who live by current labour. It will injure those who live upon the fruits of past labour, whether their fathers' or their own; in this it will . . . . work in the same direction with most of the developments which are brought about by the great law of civilisation, to which we give the noble name of 'progress.'"

Jevons strongly maintains the same view, and Allison, in a remarkable passage, points out how the resurrection of mankind from the sleep of the Middle Ages was largely owing to the increased supply of money from South America, which greatly diminished the weight of debts and taxes, and gave hope and buoyancy to mankind. Exactly the same effect was produced by the gold discoveries of California and Australia, which gave Europe 25 years of extraordinary prosperity. I should like to add that no one has written more ably on the subject of the appreciation of our gold standard and the injury that it does to the debtor class, than Mr. Giffen, who has lately shown such unaccountable hostility to our movement. I have only time to glance at two other great evils which have arisen from the demonetisation of silver. The first of these is the disturbance of the finances of India. As all the House knows, the Indian Government collects its revenues in silver, but has to pay about £15,000,000 sterling annually in gold in London for fixed charges. It is obvious that just as silver falls more and more must be parted with to meet these charges. It is clearly set forth in the Report of the Royal Commission. They show that every fall of 1d. in exchange imposes an extra burden of say 10,000,000 rupees on India, increasing as the exchange falls. Now, as the exchange has fallen in India from 1s. 11d. to 1s. 5d. per rupee since 1872, the extra burden to India is nearly 60,000,000 rupees, say of upwards of £4,000,000 at present rate of exchange. There is dispute about some minor points, but all the Indian financial authorities declare that the Revenue has suffered by several millions sterling, and the greatest confusion has been caused to Indian finance. They have had innumerable deficits since 1873, and have had to suspend the Famine Insurance Fund for several years, and add to the cruel and oppressive Salt Tax, which is now about 15 times the prime cost of the article. There is, it seems a surplus on this year's Budget, partly caused by the rise of exchange. It is said that the people of India gain just as their Government loses. I allow that there is some truth in this. Its trade is stimulated by the same cause that injured ours for so long. Its cotton manufacture has, no doubt, been galvanised by the low exchange which has hurt Manchester so much. But, on the other hand, a great impediment is put in the way of borrowing in England for railways and other re-productive works; and, when this and the increased taxation is taken into account, it is very doubtful whether India on the whole is a gainer. It must also be remembered that a great part of the savings of India, for hundreds of years, is invested in silver. India holds at least £200,000,000 sterling in coined silver, and, perhaps, as much in the shape of ornaments; and this vast mass has fallen nearly 30 per cent., as compared with the gold money of Europe. Were silver universally demonetised it would fall very much more; and were India to adopt a gold standard, as some have proposed, it would be almost confiscated. I am sure that, in the long run, a bi-metallic system would conduce to the benefit of India; and all that I have said of India holds equally true of China and other silver-using countries. I can only glance at the last great evil which has sprung from the disuse of the bi-metallic system, namely, the injury inflicted on the cotton trade of Lancashire. This industry is the greatest but one in the country. It gives a maintenance, directly and indirectly, to two millions of people, and has suffered more than any industry in England during the past 15 years, except, perhaps, the wheat growing districts. It is not experiencing the revival of trade which has visited most other industries; its progress has almost ceased, while that of our great competitors is proceeding by leaps and bounds. Will the House allow me to give some figures from Mr. Thomas Ellison's Annual Circular, which is the best authority on all questions of cotton statistics? In the 18 years from 1871 to 1889 the consumption of cotton increased in Great Britain, 25 per cent.; Continent of Europe, 107 per cent.; United States, 141 per cent.; India, 901 per cent.; in other words, it increased in India from 87,000 bales to 871,000 bales. One result of that increase has been almost to transfer a vast trade in yarn with China and Japan from Lancashire to Bombay. I can put this before the House in a single sentence. In 1874 we exported to China and Japan nine times as much yarn as was sent from India; now India sends three times as much as we do, and will apparently extinguish our trade in the course of time. Now, I assert that one chief cause of this gigantic increase of trade, is the virtual bounty given to India by the constant fall of silver and exchange. Whatever other advantages India possesses, Lancashire can easily cope with; but this bounty handicaps her hopelessly in the race. I do not intend to go into this complicated subject, as I shall be followed by a gentleman who thoroughly comprehends it in all its bearings. I will simply say that the manufacturing population thoroughly understand it; they know it is a matter of life and death to them; and they will make their influence felt in this House, either now or at the next General Election, in a way that will surprise some politicians. I will now ask the House, to turn with me to the last division of the subject, namely, the practicability and desirability of re-establishing the bi-metallic system internationally. Let me remind the House that two Conferences have been held in Paris for this purpose; the first in 1878, and the second in 1881. These Conferences were called at the joint invitation of France and the United States, and the object was to try if an international agreement could be come to for the restoration of the bi-metallic system. Germany was not represented at the First Conference, but was represented at the second one, which, practically, embraced all the principal nations of the world. It is not too much to assert that the refusal of England to alter her system was the main reason of the failure of these Conferences. There is every reason to believe that if England had agreed, then the United States, France, and Germany would have concurred, and probably nearly all the States of Europe. The great evils arising from the demonetisation of silver were admitted by all, and by none more than the English Delegates, of whom the present Chancellor of the Exchequer was one, in 1878. He said—

> "A campaign against silver would be extremely dangerous, even for countries with a gold standard. Though England had a gold standard she had great interest in the maintenance of silver as currency. One or two States might demonetise silver without serious results; but if all demonetised there would be no buyers, and silver would fall in alarming proportions. Thus all, or nearly all, States were interested in silver. If all States should resolve on the adoption of a gold standard the question arose, Would there be sufficient gold for the purpose without a tremendous crisis?"

The subject is far better understood now than it was then; it would be easier now to get a general agreement. Germany has very much altered her views, and it is believed to be now ready to join if England will be a party to International action. All turns upon the policy of this country; we can prolong the era of confusion, or we can close it. I ask, which is the nobler *rôle* to play? Now, let me deal as briefly as possible with the main objections against our scheme. In the first place, the weightiest objection is the supposed impossibility of fixing by law a permanent ratio between two articles which constantly vary in the rate and cost of production. No one has laboured as much as Mr. Giffen, and, I allow, with great ability. Mr. Giffen's great object has been to show that the French ratio did not secure fixity. I think I have proved that it did so practically in spite of the extraordinary strain to which it was subjected, first, by the small gold supply early in the century; secondly, by the inundation of gold after 1850; and thirdly, by the fact that France stood alone between England, a gold-using country, and Germany, a silver-using country, and thus was first drained of one metal and then of the other. If England, Germany, and the United States had been parties to the bi-metallic system of France, these slight variations would not have occurred. The judgment of the Currency Commission was practically unanimous on this point. Even the six members who were not in favour of this country becoming bi-metallic came to the following conclusion:—

> (Sec. 107.) "We think that in any conditions fairly to be contemplated in the future, so far as we can forecast them from the experience of the past, a staple ratio might be maintained if the nations we have alluded to (the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States, and the Latin Union) were to accept and strictly adhere to bi-metallism at the suggested ratio. We think that if in all these countries gold and silver could be freely coined and thus become exchangeable against commodities at the fixed ratio, the market value of silver as measured by gold would conform to that ratio, and not vary to any material extent."

I am aware that two Members (Sir John Lubbock and Mr. Birch) put in a mild caveat against this view; but even if we exclude them, 10 out of 12 Members fully adopted this conclusion, supported by the great name of their Chairman, Lord Herschell. One right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), while admitting the efficiency of the French ratio, feels difficulty in believing in International bi-metallism, on the ground of the great fall of silver in the sixteenth century, namely, from 11 to 1, to 15 to 1 of gold. Let me reply that the principle of International bi-metallism could not then be tested, as the nations had not then their Mints open to the unlimited coinage of both metals at a common ratio, and this is the indispensable condition for success. Each nation then acted solely for itself. Coinage was made from time to time as each Government thought best and at what ratio it thought fit, and the coins were excessively clipt and worn, and often debased by unscrupulous Governments. For instance, at the time of the great English re-coinage of 1695 so clipped and worn were the coins that, on the average, they fell short 50 per cent. of their proper weight, and the Exchequer lost £2,400,000 on the operation. It is absurd to compare such a chaotic system with our perfect coinage regulations of nowadays. If a true and uniform bi-metallic system had existed in the 16th century, it would have tided over the influx of silver from South America, just as the French system tided over the influx of gold from California and Australia. Then it is objected by some that if an International agreement were made, gold, being the over-valued metal, would gradually leave the bi-metallic countries, and silver would alone remain. Have these persons ever succeeded in showing where the gold would go to? The area we propose would contain a currency of £500,000,000 of gold coin, and £200,000,000 of full-valued silver coin, not counting token coins, which, of course, do not come within the purview of the question. I am supposing that the Union embraces France, Germany, the United States, and Great Britain, even without our Colonies and India. Is it possible that this large sum of £500,000,000 could go anywhere else, or be all used up in the Arts? The thing is absurd. These are the great creditor nations of the world; at least, the European ones are; money constantly flows to them from all other places; they can always keep what they need for their currency requirements. Besides, the other nations of the world which are mostly silver-using could have no motive in getting one metal rather than another, as both would be of exactly the value fixed by International agreement. The annual product of the mines at present is thought to be about £24,000,000 a year of gold, and about the same of silver. It is supposed that nearly half the gold is used in the Arts, or hoarded in India; and half the silver is used in the Arts and in the silver-using nations of Asia. There only remain for all Europe and America, for purposes of coinage, about £12,000,000 of gold and about the same amount of silver, which is little enough to supply the wear and tear of these Continents and to meet the growing demands of so vast a population and so great a trade. It only represents an addition to the existing Stocks of 1 or 2 per cent. annually, and is quite insufficient to disturb the equilibrium between the metals. The fact is, that under a bi-metallic system the currencies of the principal nations would hardly be affected at all. Each country would keep the metal it preferred, and England would remain mainly gold-using, with this difference—that silver could be sent to the Bank when required, as is now the case with the Bank of France, and form a basis for note issues as well as gold. We are told that silver is inconvenient for large payments. This has been humorously called the "wheelbarrow" argument. The reply is that large payments would be made then as now by means of bank notes and cheques, just as is the case in France, the only difference being that the bank reserve will consist of two metals in place of one. If needful, it could be stipulated that silver coin should not be legal tender between man and man beyond £2, though of course no limit could be put upon its payment by banks. Another objection is that the legislation we propose will benefit the silver miners, especially in the United States; and a foolish prejudice is caused by this paltry argument. In fact, no benefit would accrue unless the present market ratio of 21 to 1 were raised. It is quite doubtful what an International Conference would do; it might agree to accept the present ratio or take 20 to 1, or 18 to 1, as the future ratio. Some intermediate ratio would probably be adopted. Suppose it is 20 to 1, how would that affect the American miners? America produces £9,000,000 of silver and £5,000,000 of gold. The surplus of silver is £4,000,000 annually. If that were raised 5 per cent. it represents a gain of £200,000 annually; if 10 per cent. it comes to £400,000 a year. The figures are so trifling that it is hardly worth talking of them when we contrast them with the National Debts and fixed charges which would be affected by the standard in which payment is made. The fact is, the whole silver product of America is worth no more than the annual yield of eggs! Great use is made by our opponents of the argument that England, being a creditor country, it is her interest to be paid in gold rather than in silver. That is the pith of the Amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair). But the great bulk of the annual remittances to England represent not gold interest, but industrial investments and freights; both of these would come to us quite the same, whatever the standard money might be. English investments abroad are mainly in mines, plantations, tea, coffee, and sugar estates, and those innumerable forms of enterprise which open up the new or backward countries of the world. The income from them in no way depends upon the money employed as the standard. The amount coming home for freights is supposed to be £50,000,000 annually. The total annual surplus of imports over exports, which is roughly supposed to measure the indebtedness to England, exceeds £100,000,000 a year. I doubt whether the remittances for gold interest, after deducting silver interest, exceed £25,000,000 annually, and that goes to a very small class of the richest people in this country. Let me quote from the Currency Commission (page 35)—

> "The only gain is in connection with loans made in gold at fixed rates of interest, and the total gains from this class of investments should be reduced by the loss on similar investments made in silver or other currency which has depreciatad in comparison with gold. A large portion of this gain is made at the expense of British colonies and dependencies such as India, and does not accrue to the country at large, but to a very limited class."

This puts the whole case in a nutshell. The Member for Leeds seems to dread a torrent of silver coming into this country to re-pay debts contracted in gold. Let me assure him that the fear is purely imaginary. Payments to this country are all made in commodities, and will continue to be so made, whether the currency is gold, silver, or bi-metallic, just as they are made to France, which is also a creditor country, and annually receives a surplus of imports over exports. An Amendment is to be moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London University (Sir J. Lubbock) implying that the trade of this country has prospered because we have had a gold standard It has already been pointed out that the great prosperity of our trade came to an end about 1873-74, and did not experience a real and solid revival until last year, or the year before. Now, we virtually enjoyed the benefits of the bimetallic system until 1873-74. We could always get a fixed exchange between silver and gold at Paris, and this gave us identical money in all the world of commerce and wonderfully facilitated our trade with Asia. Between 1874 and 1887 there was a period of extraordinary depression. It is true that we are now experiencing a revival which would have come long before but for the suicidal contraction of the world's money through the demonetisation of silver. Another objection brought against our scheme is that London is the financial centre of the world, partly owing to its gold standard and the certainty that a bill on London can always be turned into gold. London is the financial centre because it has the largest reservoir of capital, and money can be borrowed here more freely than anywhere else. Were London, Paris, New York, and Berlin to be under the same monetary system, of course London would suffer no disadvantage, neither would there be any demand for gold rather than silver, as each metal would be equally useful in settling International balances. Some bankers dread a financial crisis of this great monetary change be made. Mr. Giffen has drawn an appalling picture of all bank depositors suddenly clamouring for payment in gold. This fear is quite imaginary. No such crisis occurred when the United States began coining silver as full legal tender, nor when the Currency Laws of many other countries have been altered. The change we propose would only come slowly after long deliberation by a Conference of the leading nations, and one may venture to predict that the price of silver in the open market would reach the ratio agreed on long before the time fixed for making it a legal tender. It would no doubt be agreed that the Mints of all the contracting Powers should be opened simultaneously at a certain date to the unlimited coinage of both gold and silver at a fixed ratio, each metal to be full legal tender for all debts; and the knowledge of this would equalise the value of the metals long beforehand, and take away all motive for creditors to call in their debts. If they were foolish enough to withdraw their deposits they would soon have to replace them, as they could not make any use of them otherwise. It is said the compact will not be kept, and it will give way under stress of war, or national bankruptcy. There possibly might be a temporary suspension of specie payments by some nations of the group, just as France suspended for a short time during the war of 1870-71, but the treaty would stipulate that when specie payments were resumed it should be on the old basis. It should be remembered that the French ratio lasted 70 years in spite of numerous suspensions of specie payments. The United States suspended specie payments during their Civil War, and all their specie was exported to Europe, without disturbing the French ratio. Italy and Austria suspended without any injurious result. The same result would be witnessed again, with this difference : that the plan we propose would be far wider and more secure in its foundations. The whole tendency of the time is towards International action, and there is no kind of action more necessary and beneficial than monetary legislation. The most plausible objection brought against us, and the one which most easily excites vulgar prejudice, is, that we favour Protection. I must ask permission to say a word or two about this. I utterly disclaim, for myself, the slightest desire to bring about Protection; all I wish is a just monetary standard, which will be best attained by using the two metals jointly, in place of either of them singly. I defy anyone to point out what article is "protected," except, perhaps, wheat, in the slightest possible way; but wheat would not be affected unless we alter the present ratio of 21 to 1. Suppose the ratio is altered to 20 to 1, or 18 to 1, a slight check would be given to the import of wheat from India; but Indian wheat forms but a small part of our whole import. The great bulk of our wheat comes from America and Russia, and the check to Indian wheat would probably not add more than 1s. or 2s. to the general price of wheat; and that would not arise from imposing a Protective Duty but from taking off some of the bounty which is practically given to Indian exports by the low rate of exchange. If the question of Protection is to be introduced into this discussion, then it will be found to tell far more forcibly against our opponents. What do they seek but the protection of gold against silver? They wish, as far as lies in their power, to "boycott" silver, and throw the world upon gold alone, even though such a course should double the value of gold, and double the weight of the £4,000,000,000 of National Debts payable in gold, and the far larger volume of private debts in the gold-using countries. In trying to "boycott" silver, they are giving Protection to the wealthy capitalist class, just as clearly as the old Corn Laws did to the landowners of this country. The only difference is that the amounts involved are much larger, and the protected class much richer, and the confiscation of the fruits of the toilers far more sweeping than under the old system of Corn Laws. When the masses of this country awake, as those of America have awaked, to the magnitude of this question, they will brush away this idle talk that we are trying to restore Protection. They will discover that our protected classes are the wealthy money lenders and bondholders who, through the demonetisation of silver, have robbed the debtor class as much as if 20 per cent. had been added to the weight of the sovereign. Lastly, we are charged with a desire to raise prices artificially. I reply, we really want to prevent forcing them down artificially by contracting the money supply of the world. We want to use the two metals which Nature gives automatically, and let prices fluctuate naturally according as Nature gives us more or less money. We wish to minimise the operation of human law, and accept as far as possible the law of Nature. That is true Free Trade. To use both metals is true Free Trade, while laws preventing the use of one of them is Protection. We wish to use both metals, and in doing so we believe trade will be most stable and least affected by currency legislation. Besides, our plan will make it much easier for countries like Austria, Russia, and some of the States of South America to resume specie payments. At present they must resume, if they do it at all, in gold alone; but if bi-metallism were adopted, they could resume in both gold and silver; they could draw their supplies of specie from the whole money of the world instead of from only one-half of it. The plan we propose makes in favour of hard money, that is honest money all the world over. Our scheme is equally opposed to inflating the currency or contracting it. We believe in the convertibility of the bank note and in a uniform and honest standard of value all the world over; and we believe that the two metals tied together form a more staple standard than either separately. Gold discoveries and silver discoveries seem to be made alternately, and each metal fluctuates more violently by itself than the two when joined together. I have trespassed on the time of the House for too long; my only apology is the magnitude and difficulty of the subject. I have sought to put the main features of the case as clearly as I could before the House, and I hope it will be seen that the scheme we advocate is theoretically, as well as practically, the most perfect. It cannot be denied that the recent revival of trade tells against our cause. The Budget Statement shows clearly a state of general prosperity; but this prosperity will not last for ever. Fresh monetary dislocations may again upset the trade of the world. Had America repealed the Bland Act, and ceased coining silver, we should have had another cataclysm; fortunately, she is going in the other direction, and tending more and more towards the re-monetisation of silver. France still holds a very large stock of silver; we have no security how she will act with it until an International agreement is arrived at. Germany still holds a considerable quantity of its old silver, circulating like that of France, at its old ratio of 15½ to 1. The whole situation is provisional and uncertain, and no one can guess what developments may occur within the next few years. We may have entire re-monetisation of silver in America, coming along with a great yield of gold in South Africa, which may bring back the old ratio of the metals; or we may have fresh demonetisation of silver which may force it down much lower than has yet been seen. The present is a favourable time for International negotiations. The Temple of Janus is closed. Peace and goodwill reign among the nations of the world. Is not this a fitting time to call a Conference to settle this vexed and complicated question? We have had an International Labour Conference with good results. Can we not have an International Monetary Conference with even better results? I appeal to the House to give a vote in favour of Progress, Peace, and Free Trade, and to lead the way in a policy that makes for justice all the world over.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House the evils which have resulted from the divergence in the relative value of silver and gold following the monetary changes which took place in Europe in 1873, can best be dealt with by a Conference of the chief Commercial Nations of the World called to consider whether a bi-metallic system can be re-established by International agreement in the interest of all the Nations concerned,"—(*Mr. Samuel Smith,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(5.10.) **Sir W. HOULDSWORTH** (Manchester, N.W.): I desire to second the Motion. There are two propositions in the Resolution which will be generally accepted—first, that about 1873 there took place a great monetary change in Europe; and, secondly, that from that date an unprecedented divergence in the relative value of gold and silver occurred. There is a third proposition intimately connected with the other two, namely, that certain evils have resulted from that divergence between silver and gold. The monetary change to which I refer was the closing of the Mints of France and the Latin Union to the free coinage of silver at a fixed ratio. The divergence in the relative value of silver and gold which followed was continuous and extensive. In 1872 silver was at 60d.; in 1889 it had fallen to 42d. These are facts which cannot be denied. There is, however, a further question, which I admit may be a subject of controversy, although I should have thought that after the Report of the Royal Commission, supported as it is by the unanimous opinion of all the political economists of the day, it would have been finally set at rest. That question is whether any connection existed between the monetary change of which I have spoken and the great divergence that took place. Our argument is this: Before 1873, when Mints were open in Europe for the free coinage of silver at a fixed ratio, that circumstance tied gold to silver, and, as a matter of fact, the relative value between them remained constant. But in 1873, when those Mints were closed, new conditions arose. Silver then became a commodity, and was left entirely to the action of the laws of supply and demand. The finding of the Royal Commission on this point is absolute and unanimous. The Commissioners arrived at these two conclusions—first, that during the period before 1873, there must have been some steadying influence, apart from the laws of supply and demand, that kept the relative value of gold and silver approximately

stable; and, secondly, that after 1873 that steadying influence must have been removed. After looking over the whole field that was brought before them, they could discover no other steadying influence which could produce this effect except the Bi-metallic Law of France. It was due to bi-metallism that the ratio between gold and silver was maintained between 1803 and 1873. In their investigations of the variations in the value of silver in the 40 years preceding 1873, between the highest and the lowest point, they found the difference was only 3d. When they came to the 14 years after 1873, they found the difference between the highest and the lowest point was 15d. If they had continued their investigations to 1889, they would have found it reached 17d. Further, the Commission found that the maximum fluctuation in 1872 was not more than five-eighths of a penny, whereas in 1886 it was not less than 3d. Seeking for the causes of these facts, the Commission found that while in the 10 years, from 1831 to 1840, the production of silver was double that of gold, in the years from 1851 to 1855 it was only one-fourth of gold, and yet, notwithstanding these fluctuations of supply, the market price of silver remained about the same during the whole period. Next, taking the period after 1873, they found the supply of gold and silver had been about equal, and yet the fluctuations in the market price of silver varied from 15½ to 1 to 18 to 1. With results such as these before them the Commissioners unanimously came to the conclusions I have mentioned. Those conclusions have been contested in the public Press, and by no less an authority than Mr. Giffen, to whom reference has already been made. Mr. Giffen has denied that bi-metallism had any effect whatever in maintaining the ratio before 1873, and that the rupture of the system did not cause the fall in the price of silver. Now, Mr. Giffen's position on this subject is rather peculiar. He gave very valuable evidence before the Commission, and presented statistics which are the foundation of our conclusions, and I do not desire in any degree to disparage that eminent and useful public servant. But it is to be regretted that he declined to give the Commission any assistance in the investigation of the practical part of this question, and absolutely refused to lay his views before the Commission. The excuse he gives, apparently, is that he was asked to come before the Commission as the champion of mono-metallism. All I can say is that the Commissioners, as a body, certainly never asked Mr. Giffen to appear in that capacity, though, of course, I cannot speak for the views of individual Members of the Commission. Mr. Giffen may, however, have had good reasons for not assisting us in our investigations. But, at any rate, I think it was a very questionable proceeding on his part when, immediately the Report was published, he violently attacked that Report, and certain of the Commissioners personally. And when Mr. Giffen went so far as to characterise the Report of the Commission as a scandal of the first magnitude, I can only say that his views on this subject would have had more weight if he had addressed himself to a consideration of the Report in a more judicial spirit. The main argument of Mr. Giffen is, that during the period of bi-metallism, there were variations in the ratio, and this he urges as if it were in itself destructive of our theory of bi-metallism. Mr. Giffen went back as far as the year 1581, and certainly gave figures showing variations between that year and 1803 of 23 to 27 per cent. But we decline to accept that period as one of effective bi-metallism. From 1803 to 1873, which bi-metallists are willing to accept as a scientific period of bi-metallism, though it was only in operation over a limited area, the variations only ranged from ½ to 3 per cent. But it is an entire mistake to suppose that variations are inconsistent with bi-metallism. It does not follow that the market ratio is always the same as the legal ratio. The legal ratio is not an absolute, but a controlling force, keeping the variations in the market ratio within certain definite limits. It acts like the governor of a steam engine, and the effect of bi-metallism is clearly manifested during the years between 1803 and 1873 by the fact that the variations of ratio were very slight compared to what they had been formerly and to what they have been since. Mr. Giffen's opinion carries weight, I know; I would therefore like to strengthen our case by quotations from undoubted authorities on such subjects—Professor Walker, Professor Jevons, and Mr. Bagehot.

[Here follow quotations.] Thus I think I have shown that the Bi-metallic Law is a real power which can bind the legal ratio and the market ratio together within certain variations; and that is the basis of our application to the House of Commons to-night to entertain and consider the question. I will now proceed to say a few words on what, perhaps, the House will consider of more importance, and that is the evils which we believe have arisen from this divergence in the relative value of gold and silver which has undoubtedly taken place since 1873. I notice that the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of London says there is no justification for any fundamental change in the standard of value. Well, I am rather at a loss to understand fully what he means by "no justification." Does he mean that no effect whatever has been produced by this divergence between silver and gold since 1873? Does he mean to say there has been no injury, no loss, no effect whatever upon trade? I cannot think he for a moment would make such an assertion, because it is utterly opposed to the Report which he himself signed. It is there distinctly acknowledged by the Commissioners, in that portion of the Report to which the name of the right hon. Gentleman is attached, that there had been a serious amount of loss and embarrassment and injury to trade. If he means that there has not been sufficient justification for this change, then I should like him, when he addresses the House, to tell us what amount of injury, damage, and loss he thinks is necessary in order to justify the change which we propose. It can be proved both from personal knowledge, and also from statistics, that, during the last 18 years, the country has been going through a period of depression which has been more intense and more peculiar than any that has preceded it for many years before, and it has not been accounted for in any way except by monetary causes. A Commission was appointed to examine carefully into the cause of the depression of trade in 1882. It took an immense amount of evidence, yet it could not put its finger upon any real reason why there should have been such a depression. But the moment that the Currency Commission met, as will be found from their Report, paragraph after paragraph show they acknowledged that monetary causes had produced injury and loss and depression. I know there is a prevalent opinion that trade is in a satisfactory state at the present moment, but I think a great deal more has been made of the late improvement than is justified by the facts. I still hope that the improvement may not pass away, but I noticed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, last night, seemed to be more sanguine than I am as to the improvement. He used the expression, "trade was reviving." From my knowledge, I should rather say that trade had revived, and that it is again declining. Whether that decline will go on or not I do not wish to anticipate, but we have had this very peculiar experience during the last 18 years, which we never had before in commercial centres, that while we have had slight periods of improvement, they have only continued for a month or two, and then they have passed away. We have had what the Chancellor of the Exchequer, last night, very happily called "false dawns." During the last 18 years, when there has been an improvement in trade it has lasted only for a few months at a time, or 12 months at the outside. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has noticed the Returns of the exports for last month. They are very startling, because they show a falling off of £100,000,000. I do not wish to make too much of this. I do not think it represents a real decline of trade. To a large extent it may be accounted for by other causes, but, at the same time, from my own knowledge of the state of trade both in the iron industry and in the cotton industry, I have no hesitation in saying, that if the present state of things continue the Board of Trade Returns during the next month and the month after will be materially affected. There is no doubt that not only have prices fallen, but the visible demand from abroad, and from the home markets, in both the cotton and the iron industry is perceptibly less than it was. Take a longer period. Last year was a good year, the best year we have had for some time. The imports and exports then reached £740,000,000. But go back to 1883;

we then had exports and imports as large. That is to say, we have made no progress whatever since 1883, and in the intervening period of years the total amount of exports and imports was materially less. I should just like to refer the House to some statements that have appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, some sensational paragraphs which I think I ought to notice. A statement has been made that the cotton industry of Oldham is making large profits. Some of these profits are given. One remarkable case is mentioned — one amongst others — of a firm which has, so it is said, made 39 per cent. profit. To say the least, that is a most misleading statement, because, as far as it is accurate, it only means that profits have been made at the rate of 39 per cent. for the last quarter. It is a mistake to assume that this was the profit of the past twelve months. They have made nothing of the sort.

An hon. MEMBER: The statement says so—per annum.

*SIR W. HOULDSWORTH: Then it is untrue. But the only way in which 39 per cent., even for the quarter, could be brought out is by calculating the amount of profit on the share capital only. Now, it is well known that in many cases, especially in Oldham, the borrowed capital is two or three, or even four times more than the share capital. The consequence is that if the profits that have actually been made were divided over the whole of the capital employed in the business, the percentage would be reduced very materially. And a curious fact is this, that although that statement is put forward to induce people to believe that the cotton industry is doing well, yet out of the 19 mills which were referred to in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in 12 of those mills the shares are actually at a discount, and out of 92 mills in the Oldham Official List, in 54 the shares are similarly at a discount. It is perfectly clear, therefore, these figures do not give a true representation of the state of affairs. But these figures would have to be considered from another point of view if accepted as real profits made in this industry. I have a case here of a spinning business, which shows a profit for the last quarter of £3,385, but the way in which that profit has been made was, at any rate, as far as £2,500 was concerned, by speculating in cotton—not by legitimate working. Now, I should like to bring before the House some figures, I think, of rather an astonishing character. I do not adduce them for one moment for the purpose of showing what the effect of the divergence between silver and gold has been; but I think they are sufficiently startling to induce the House to consider the state in which our industries are, as compared with those of foreign countries. The statement I have is a comparison between 1870 and 1884, and I find that, taking the imports and exports of 11 of the large Continental nations, they have increased by no less than between 50 and 60 per cent. in those years, whereas those of this country, in the same period, have only increased by 11 per cent. Now what the divergence in the relative value of silver and gold really did, especially when there was a heavy fall in the value of silver, was to dislocate the whole machinery of trade. From the merchants down to the workpeople they are all, more or less, affected the moment you have anything like a serious divergence in the relative value of the two currencies, gold and silver. It is very simple to see how it affects our own country. Silver, the House will remember, has fallen 30 per cent. Whenever a fall takes place in the gold price of silver one of two things must occur. Either the gold price of commodities must fall, or the silver price must rise, or an adjustment must be brought about by both these operations combined. You must have an adjustment of some sort or another. The gold price of silver fell 30 per cent., but did silver prices rise? We find they did not. The consequence is, the whole weight fell upon gold, and an adjustment had to be brought about, and, as a matter of fact, was brought about, by the fall in gold prices. Silver prices remained as they were. Now, what is the effect of a fall in gold prices of anything like 30 per cent? Three classes are specially affected —the merchants, the agricultural industry, and the manufacturing industry. The merchant, to a great extent, is not in the same position as the capitalist or the wage-earner, who is engaged in industrial operations. The merchant is more independent. What he really suffers from is not so much the fall in silver as the fluctuations in the rate of exchange. His business is quite different from what it was a few years ago. It was not then so dependent on the slight variations which take place in prices from day to day. But now transactions are carried out by telegraph from Calcutta to Manchester direct, and generally the transaction from the buying of the cotton to the selling of the article produced is completed in one day. The consequence is that the profit which the merchant receives is very small indeed, being nothing more than a small commission for his trouble in carrying out the transaction; and unless, day by day, there is constant business he suffers considerable loss; and he finds exchange varies frequently, that business, instead of being steady from day to day or from week to week, according to the variations of demand, is subjected to a series of fits and starts. Whenever a new fall takes place business is stopped until the exigency of the manufacturer forces him to take the lower gold price, and so, from time to time, there are checks upon trade which are fatal to the successful carrying on of the merchant's business. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer has fully recognised this, because in the Conference alluded to, and which he attended, I noticed he put in the forefront, in regard to the difficulties which had arisen at that time through the fall silver, the case of the merchant. Since then the evil has been intensified. I put the case of the agriculturist and the manufacturer together, for, in most respects, they may be considered in conjunction for the present purpose. The effect of the fall in the gold price of silver has been to drive down gold prices in this country, and those engaged in industry, whether agricultural or manufacturing, have had to accept a lower gold price. It has not been the case of one fall of 30 per cent., but it has been a gradual going down of prices during the last eight, 10, or 15 years, and lower, step by step, has fallen the gold price which the manufacturer receives for his goods. The House should understand that this gold price comes down instantly if a fall has taken place in the gold price of silver. Those who deal in wholesale markets are aware that they are very sensitive to any action or any rumour which has a tendency to affect prices, and the consequence is that the moment there is anything in the atmosphere which ought to lower gold price immediately the gold price goes down in the wholesale market. But what position is the manufacturer in? If the manufacturer has to reduce the gold price which he receives in exchange for his goods by 5 or 10 per cent. he suffers immediately loss unless he can at once reduce the cost of his production by a similar amount. The items which make up the cost of production are—first, his rent, including interest to bankers and to mortgagees; secondly, articles consumed in the business; and, thirdly, wages. With regard to rent and interest on mortgages the manufacturer cannot get the rate reduced immediately, as he is often under a contract for years. With regard to articles of consumption, he is often under contract for 12 months, or has to deal with a middleman, who does not freely give him the benefit of the lower gold prices. As to wages, they are not adjusted day by day, and cannot be adjusted at all except with a considerable amount of friction. I have here some figures as to the effect of this fall in gold prices upon a particular business. In 1874 I find that the selling value fell from 100 to 88, and the cost of production, exclusive of raw material, only fell from 100 to 99; in 1875 the selling value fell to 81, and the cost of production to 94. Then, in 1876, the selling value fell to 65, whilst the cost of production fell only to 86. During that period, therefore, the manufacturer was reduced to cost price, or possibly something below it, and so was gradually adding to his indebtedness to his bankers and others, and getting a millstone around his neck which he could not throw off. This explains the depression which has been prevalent in the textile and mining and iron industries during the last 18 years, while there has been this steady fall in the gold price, attributable to the fact that there has been a fall in the gold price of silver. It will be said, I have no doubt, by some Members that this is, after all, only a question of a little loss to the capitalist which he can very well bear. But it is a much larger question, because, although the brunt falls upon him first, the effect goes downwards to the wage-earner, who, year after year, has been called upon to suffer some loss of wages. Then no doubt it will be said—I think it was said before the Royal Commission—"Yes, but although the wage-earner has less wages, still he cannot be any the worse off, because the price of commodities will also be lower." I think it will be found, however, that the wage-earner does not get the benefit in the fall in the price of commodities; certainly not for a very long time, and that is the reason why the working classes join their employers so heartily in this movement, believing it is at the root of the depression and of the loss which they have sustained during the last 18 years. I should like to strengthen my observations by a quotation from the Report of the Royal Commission signed by those Members of the Commission who do not recommend bi-metallism. They say—

> "So far as the fall in prices can be connected with the currency, it must tend to diminish the margin of profit, or even to cause it to disappear altogether. This necessarily results in an effort on the part of the manufacturer to economise the cost of production by reducing the wages of the operatives. Even if the manufacturers could succeed in reducing wages sufficiently to maintain their former position, this could only be done after considerable struggles, and an amount of friction very undesirable."

Again—

> "It seems by no means clear that there has been a fall in the price of all that the wage-earner needs, and upon which his wages are expended, equivalent to the reduction of wages which has, in fact, taken place."

I think that there can be no doubt that, although the brunt of the loss may fall upon the manufacturer and the farmer, the wage-earner is ultimately the greatest sufferer. That is the reason why the wage-earning classes have joined the employers in this movement. They believe that they have discovered in our present system of currency, the cause of the depression from which they have suffered. This is especially the view taken by the people of Lancashire. Although trade has improved, upon the whole, the improvement in Lancashire has been very slight and very shortlived. Another point I ought to mention is the stimulus that has been given to cotton spinning in India. This question was examined by a Committee of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and their Report shows that a great part of the cotton spinning industry of Lancashire has been transferred to India, where, as an effect of the fall in exchange, spinning mills have been stimulated to an unnatural extent, and while the exports of yarn from India, to China and Japan, have increased between 1876 and 1887 from 70,000,000 lbs. to 113,000,000 lbs., the exports from Lancashire, to these counties have remained stationary, and, during some periods, have actually decreased. I find, in point of fact, that in 1887 the exports to China and Japan were considerably less than in 1881, and while the trade of these English mills has been taken away from Lancashire, Lancashire has found nothing to put in its place. For the total exports of cotton yarn from England has decreased in 1887 as compared with 1881 by 4,000,000 lbs. I ought perhaps to notice, however, that, within the last few months, a reaction has taken place in India, as, according to the *Bombay Gazette*, the cotton industry is now in a somewhat critical state in that country, owing to the fact that too many people have been tempted to engage in it. This is the natural consequence of an artificial stimulus. What we want, in order to correct the evils I have attempted to describe, is not inflation or protection, but stability. But how we are to get stability in our standard of value, as long as we have no connecting link between gold and silver, it is impossible for me to conceive. One half of the British Empire uses silver, while the other half carries on its dealings in gold. And, consequently, it will not be too much to say that it will be absolutely necessary, in the course of a few years, to establish some connecting tie between the two currencies employed in the British Empire, to say nothing about other silver-using countries. In one sense, I may say, we bi-metallists are mono-metallists, because we believe that if there could be one metal which would serve as a currency for the whole world, that would be the best system we could adopt. As it is, however, one-half of the world uses, and will use, silver, and the other half uses gold. The question to be solved is, whether we can so connect the two currencies as to tie silver and gold together, so that, although you may have different currencies and different coins, you will have but one standard of value. I have to thank the House very much for the patience with which it has listened to what, I am afraid, has been an exceedingly dry statement, full of matters of detail, but the question is certainly a very serious one. It is said that the price of silver is being raised in America, but what we have really to look at is, whether the price of silver will be maintained in a stable condition? As far as I am personally concerned, I do not care very much what ratio may be accepted as long as a stable ratio is established. If a Conference is called to establish a ratio, I have no doubt it will be able to do so; but that ratio will probably not be widely different from that which exists between the two metals at the time the ratio is fixed. The main point is, that whatever is done should be done with as little change as possible, and, having said this, I trust that the House will very seriously consider this important question as one which vitally affects the interests of trade.

*(6.45.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): Sir, I join with my hon. Friend behind me and the hon. Member who has spoken from the other side of the House in attributing the highest importance to this question. I think the House is indebted to them for the moderation with which they have stated their case, and the evident desire which they manifested to reach a sound and satisfactory conclusion. But their speeches have only shown the great difficulties which surround the question. My hon. Friend has stated that the fall in prices is attributable wholly to the fall in the price of silver. It is, no doubt, attributable to that, concurrently with other causes. But I have not been able to find any evidence, either in the arguments addressed to this House or in the Report of the Commission, or elsewhere, which is absolutely conclusive to show that the fall of silver is, in point of fact, intimately connected with the fall in the value of commodities in different parts of the world. We must ask those who desire this enormous change in the currency of this country, upon which our great commercial transactions rest, in what way they connect the one result with the other? I have been at some pains to examine our Trade Reports during the last few years. There has been a fall which is most distressing to many of those interests which have been engaged in the production of particular commodities. But the fall has not been uniform or constant. There have been variations in prices; there are now variations of a very remarkable character. I will refer to some prices of our imports and exports between the years 1885 and 1889. Many articles have fallen considerably; others, like coffee and fish, have risen. Animals—oxen and sheep—have fallen 16 and 19 per cent. But these very articles, which in 1889 had fallen, will be shown in 1890 to have risen. I believe wheat is now dearer than it has been for some years. But coffee, fish, hemp, jute, have risen from 13 to 31 per cent. Copper ore is dearer than it was in 1885. Iron ore has risen 12 per cent, and manufactured articles are considerably dearer than they were. These variations in prices are shown to exist notwithstanding the continued fall in silver. Some articles have thus risen, while others have fallen in value. But I think my hon. Friends will be prepared to admit that if a universal law had applied to the value of a great number of articles which are abstracted from the ground or grown on the ground, or manufactured, uniformly with the fall or rise of silver, we should have had a different return from that which is shown in the public documents to which I have referred. My hon. Friend has said that what he desires is stability. We all recognise the force of that. But he proposes to link silver with gold, in order that this stability shall be maintained. That is to say, that the metal which has fluctuated in price shall be joined with gold, which has not fluctuated. ["No, no."] I have not heard any proof that there has been a fluctuation in the value of gold. I think I have not unfairly stated the view which my hon. Friend takes. He has argued with great ability that the owner of silver ought to be able to take a bar of silver to the Mint and insist that it shall be turned into coin at a fixed rate. It has been profitable for the owners of silver mines to produce an enormously increased amount of silver during the last 20 years. The production has quadrupled and reached 24 millions a year. It has been possible for them to sell this silver at 42d. an ounce. If it is profitable to sell at that price it would be possible, if a fixed ratio were established, by tendering at a higher value than 42d., to make

a larger profit and increase the quantity tendered to the Mint and request that it should be returned in coin. The result would be to produce that excess of silver coinage which it was the object of the Latin Union in 1873 to put an end to. Why should the members of the Latin Union decline to continue the system which prevailed up to 1873? I can only assume—I do not positively know—that the increase of the stores of silver alarmed the members of the Latin Union. The German Government declined to continue the coinage of silver. My hon. Friend behind me has referred to the Indian mills and the bounty which the fall in silver confers upon them. I quite agree that the Indian producer is at some advantage as compared with this country. Admitting that the English merchant is at some disadvantage as compared with the factory owner in Bombay, we cannot generalise from that on the whole trade with India. The statistics show that in 1873 990,000,000 yards of cotton goods were exported from the United Kingdom to British India. That figure increased in 1877 to 1,305,000,000 yards; in 1882 to 1,522,000,000 yards; and in 1887 to 1,812,000,000 yards. In other words, in spite of the enormous development of the cotton trade in India, our exports to India of cotton goods increased 50 per cent. between 1877 and 1887.

*SIR W. HOULDSWORTH: May I explain that the Indian mills do not manufacture piece goods to any great extent? The question is as to the yarns they produce.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: My hon. Friend is in possession of technical knowledge which I do not possess, and I am quite sure he is accurate in his statement; but I may at least rely on this: that notwithstanding all the disadvantages which I admit the exchange imposes on the English merchant, there has been during the last 15 years a very considerable increase in the cotton trade with India, although during that period the rate of exchange has fallen from 1s. 11d. to 1s. 5d. Therefore the trade must have been, on the whole, profitable, and no doubt it has been conducted with the wisdom and skill which Lancashire merchants always display in their business. The value of the exports of the United Kingdom to India—and that means largely the export of Lancashire goods—shows an increase of 14 per cent. during the quinquennial period ending 1882, and another increase of 14 per cent. during the quinquennial period ending 1887. I admit that there has been an enormous increase in the number of spindles and looms in India and a great increase in the export of yarn. In 1876 the spindles numbered 1,100,000, and in 1887 they numbered 2,200,000. Seeing that we share in the prosperity of India, I ask whether that is a circumstance to be deplored—whether we have any right to regret that India is developing manufactures and supplying so largely that part of the world with its manufactures? Would it be right, by adopting any change in our financial policy, to check an industry which appears to be so successful? My hon. Friend said that the ratio to be determined by any particular international agreement was a matter of no consequence. I think it is a matter of very considerable consequence. The very first question that would be asked of us if we proposed a Conference would be, "What ratio do you propose to fix between the values of silver and gold? We are very large holders of silver, and we shall be largely influenced by the view which you take. Silver at the present moment is 45d. or 46d. an ounce. Before we enter this Conference we want to know whether you are prepared to re-monetise silver at the price which it cost us some 10 or 15 years ago." If a man had debts owing to him he would, I think, hesitate to receive payment for them in silver forced 20 or 30 per cent. above its present value. I listened attentively to the speech of the hon. Gentleman who opened the debate, and I observed that he was of opinion that, somehow or other, those to whom debts are due are exacting by fraud something like £30,000,000 a year from their debtors. I have not been able to see how he arrived at that conclusion. I do see that he would propose to pay them in a currency and metal which would probably be worth less by £30,000,000 a year than the metal and currency in which they are at present entitled to be paid.

*MR. S. SMITH: My argument was that £200,000,000 are annually paid by this country for fixed charges, contracted mostly when gold and silver were at a ratio of 15½ to 1. The demonetisation of silver lowered the value of silver 30 per cent. and increased that of gold 40 per cent.; and as the increased purchasing power of gold is due to this circumstance, creditors are now receiving 20 per cent. more than they are entitled to on the basis on which the debts were contracted.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I should like the hon. Gentleman to go into a court of morals and endeavour to prove his case. I should be glad to listen to the argument that would be urged on both sides, and to the decision that would be given. He says that these debts were contracted on a bi-metallic basis. They were contracted upon the basis of the currency which was established in 1816. Every man who has borrowed in gold is bound to pay in gold, and even in America there are gold debts and silver debts. This is not the first time that the House of Commons has debated the subject of bi-metallism. My attention has been drawn to a Motion made by Mr. Attwood just 60 years ago. He moved—

> "That it is expedient to repeal so much of the Act 56 George III., c. 68, as declares gold coins the only legal tender in payment of all sums beyond the amount of 40s., and to establish that gold and silver coins of the realm, coined in the relative proportion of 15½ lb. weight of sterling silver to 1 lb. of sterling gold, shall be a legal tender in all money engagements, as directed and ordered by the Proclamation of the fourth year of George I."

When the hon. Gentleman opposite is prepared to put a distinct proposition before the House as to the value at which silver is to be re-monetised we may understand what it will involve. It was pointed out by Mr. Herries, in the debate on Mr. Attwood's Motion, that—

> "Every man who had claims payable upon demand, every man who held notes of small or great value, every man who had debts outstanding would, if he secured the amount of what was due to him before this Resolution passed into law, get the whole of his money; whereas if he delayed beyond that period he could only get £95 for every £100."

To pass such a Resolution, Mr. Herries said, would be the greatest of disasters to a mercantile country. It would result in this: that all those who were entitled to demand money advanced by them would instantly require that it should be paid, and in the coin and currency in which the debt had been contracted. Mr. Herries pointed out, with overwhelming force, that the inevitable result of such a sudden change in the basis of our circulation and mercantile transactions would be to produce a panic, with absolutely disastrous consequences. A change is proposed to be made because it would be advantageous to the debtor, But if that be so, the creditor has a right to say, "I will not wait for this change. I insist upon having while I can all that belongs to me." I appeal to hon. Gentlemen, considering the vast credit transactions which go on in this country, considering the transactions which we have with the whole world, to form some idea of the disasters which would result from such a desire on the part of the creditors to claim what was due to them before such a change was made. Sir Robert Peel, on that occasion, said the notion of a double standard was utterly fallacious and would be found utterly impracticable. I entertain the same view. I believe that the proposal is impracticable, and that any attempt to carry it out would produce a terrible state of disaster. I need not apologise for quoting the words of Lord Althorp, when he said—

> "He was perfectly satisfied that it would be utterly impossible to alter the value of our money without producing an effect upon the commerce of the country that, with reference not only to our exchanges with foreign countries but to our domestic affairs, must be in the highest degree mischievous and destructive. It was of the utmost importance that the measure of value should remain fixed, and he, for one, therefore, would not consent to any further alteration in our monetary system."

There has been throughout the discussion a suggestion of the scarcity of money, and the necessity of monetising silver in order to afford sufficient currency for the transactions of the world. I speak with great humility, because I am not a great financial authority; but it does appear to me that silver and gold have little to do beyond constituting a measure of value—a measure of value something like that famous standard yard locked up in the Board of Trade. Within the last few years there has been a development of our banking system all over the world to such an extent that gold for the purpose of actual commerce and trade has become simply the measure of value, and I am not able in the slightest degree to detect any evidence of a deficiency of gold. One of the first means of detecting it would be in in the discounts. A scarcity of gold raises the rate of discount. But during the last 15 years the rate of discount has been extremely low in this country. There has been no absence of credit, and there has been no deficiency in that material without which enterprise cannot proceed. I have looked into the average rates of discount from 1874 to 1888, and I find that in only one year, 1882, when it was 4⅛, did the average exceed 3¾. It ranged from 3 and 3¼ to 2, 2½, 2¾, and 2⅜. That is a conclusive proof that there was plenty of what I should call mercantile money for the purposes of the business of the world. There has been a great fall of prices in wheat, and many other articles; but I venture to maintain the opinion that that fall is due rather to the abundance of money than to its deficiency, to the enterprise which has prevailed throughout the world in a time of general peace, and the facility with which men can enter into vast commercial transactions. We are told that railways and steamboats existed before 1874. They did exist; but the development of the world by railways and steamboats has been something absolutely enormous during the last 15 years. There is no comparison between 1890 and 1874 in the facilities afforded to the trader, the merchant, the producer, in all parts of the world. Railways bring produce from distant parts of India, for instance, to the coast, steamers bring it from the coast to our wharves and quays at a price which hardly exceeds the cost of transit from New York 20 years ago. These changes account largely for the great fall in prices which has taken place. But that fall is not universal. It is confined largely to articles of universal production, which can be brought to our markets from all parts of the world. But articles limited in production, such as articles of art, have increased, and will continue to increase, in value. If that be the case, the argument based upon the fall of silver is not a sound argument. I agree with the paragraph in the Report which says that the change proposed would be a leap in the dark. I feel that it would be a tremendous leap in the dark, and that we have no evidence that the change proposed would be a sound one, or that it would not produce disastrous consequences. On these grounds, not that I am indifferent to the views expressed by the Lancashire operatives, or that I do not sympathise with those who are in distress, I must for myself individually decline to assume the responsibility of recommending to the House a change which I regard as dangerous, and as not justified by any of the facts or elements involved in the case.

(7.26.) **SIR W. HARCOURT** (Derby): I was glad to hear the sentiments of strong common-sense that fell from the First Lord of the Treasury. But I confess I was a little surprised that the head of the English Treasury, on a subject which affects so greatly English commerce and credit, says that he speaks for himself only and individually. I entirely agree in the views the right hon. Gentleman has expressed; but I have also to convey to the House opinions much more valuable than any I could offer. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) has also very clear and definite opinions on the subject, and, occupying the position which he holds, it is right that those opinions should be known. This question goes to the root of the existence of a great commercial country. I confess I have never been able myself to grasp the transcendental formula of "tying two metals by a ratio." That is really a sort of philosophising phrase to express that you want to pay a debt in a metal of less value than that in which the debt was supposed to be contracted. These scientific formulæ of tying metals together by a ratio only conceal what is a very simple fact. It is said that we lived some 15 years ago in the halcyon days of bi-metallism; but if we did, we did not live in that condition by any will or judgment of our own. The judgment of the whole of English statesmen at that time, and down to the present time, was, that there should be a mono-metallic standard. It is supposed that the bi-metallism of France controlled the commercial relations of the world. How could it be that a country which had only a limited foreign trade should be able to operate so immensely on the commercial relations of the world? If this is so admirable a system, why has the Latin Union abandoned it? I have never heard an answer to that question. Why is it that the world, instead of imitating the admirable example of the bi-metallism of France, has rushed to copy the disastrous and ruinous mono-metallism of England?

You may, or you may not, obtain an agreement with other countries; but after you have got an agreement, what security have you that that agreement will be maintained? Supposing that you can get an agreement with the other Powers of Europe in order to make this enormous change, where would you be if one of the Powers in some great crisis, such as a European war, abandoned this agreement? It would knock the key-stone out of the whole of the monetary and commercial system of England. At present you have your own financial basis, your own commercial system, which have been unparalleled in the history of the world, founded as they are on the principles on which we now rely. But you are asked to abandon that system and to adopt a system which the advocates of bi-metallism admit can only exist by an almost universal agreement with other Powers. That is to say, you are to go into a partnership with all the other Powers of Europe with respect to your trade, finance, and commercial prosperity. I say that this is a most dangerous thing for you to attempt. Suppose we had been in the position of having an international agreement in 1870. France and Germany were going to war. Supposing Germany had conceived that it would have been of advantage to her in that life struggle to attract a great deal of gold to Germany; and supposing she had been a party to this international agreement, and had thought it would be to her advantage to terminate her connection with the Bi-metallic Union, would she not have done it at once? Of course she would, and the finances of England would have been thrown into a condition of confusion by resting on an agreement of this character. Why is this general agreement wanted? If you choose to overvalue your silver, and to say it shall bear a ratio of 1 to 15 instead of a ratio of 1 to 22, the gold will, of course, go away from the country. But the bi-metallist answer is that if you get a universal agreement the gold has nowhere to go to. Yes; but in the event, say, of Germany receding from the agreement, there would be a place for the gold to go to, and there it would go at once. The result, therefore, is that you place yourselves in a position which depends on a universal agreement, and if one or two of the parties to it withdraw, the whole of your reserve of gold at once goes to them. I protest against making the commercial interests and the financial system of England dependent on an international agreement. It never has been so, and we cannot safely make it so now. The condemnation of the bi-metallic theory is that international agreement is, from the bi-metallists' point of view, absolutely indispensable and necessary to their system. The financial system of England has stood upon its own basis and has not been dependent on international agreement, on the permanence and stability of which no reliance can be placed. You will never get stability in international arrangements. In old days you had the balance of power, which depended on international agreement. How long was it before the Treaties were broken, and then what became of the balance of power? Very much the same fate would overtake you with regard to the balance of metals. I do not understand why, if silver is to be declared by Act of Parliament or International Statute to be of the same value as gold for all the purposes which have been indicated, we should have any gold at all. It seems to me that, if the two metals are to be declared to be of equal value, gold may as well disappear. I remember, during the brief period I was at the Exchequer, that I had the opportunity of talking with Sir Stafford Northcote, and I never shall forget the quiet, humorous contempt with which he treated the subject. He said—"If it be true that you can settle the value of anything by international Statute, why should we have either silver or gold at all? Why not have an international agreement, to the effect that all transactions should be done with leather, as in ancient times?" Why have we had this theory propounded for the revival of prosperity? Men of business want to pay their debts in an appreciated currency; and one of the reasons why I oppose this system is because I am not prepared to raise prices either by Act of Parliament or by international agreement. Unfortunately, I belong to the consuming class: I am not an enemy of low prices: I experience the benefit of them, and I value the low prices of commodities. We are told there is no question that the great disaster which has befallen the world is owing to low prices. But this is not the first time that we have heard this. It is not since bi-metallism was abandoned by the Latin Union that the waves of low prices have appeared. I was reading the other day an instructive book by my friend Mr. Spencer Walpole, in which the author gives an account of the prices in 1820, and the commercial disasters which took place at that time. Exactly the same remedies were proposed then. The first thing which the people who suffer from low prices say is, "Let us tamper with the currency;" and no doubt periods of considerable distress will always induce people to seek strange revenue. That is the reason, no doubt, why these remedies have become more or less popular now. Take the case of India. I am not at all surprised that in Lancashire and elsewhere there should be a certain jealousy at the increase of native Indian production, and I do not complain that those who suffer should complain. But I do complain of the language used on this subject by the Government of India. The Government of India, in the despatches which I have seen, have treated this question as if it was one solely of exchange upon the salaries of Anglo-Indians. ["No."] I have seen appeals to the Protectionist prejudices which are supposed to exist among the English producers; but there is a class of people which the Indian Government might have some consideration for, and that is the native population of India, who are the producers of these commodities. During the short time I was at the Exchequer I wrote a despatch in answer to one from the Indian Government on this question of bi-metallism. The First Lord of the Treasury has hit the nail on the head when he asks, "What is your ratio going to be?" If this theory is true, it may be anything you like. If the philosophical theory is correct, you may declare to-morrow that the value of silver is equal to that of gold. If, when the market value is 1 to 20, you can say it shall be 1 to 15, why should you not say it is 1 to 10, or 1 to 5, or 1 to 1? As the First Lord of the Treasury has said, the great inducement to countries to hold large stocks of silver is the hope that the ratio will be restored to 1 to 15. Now, it is said, "Let us put it at 1 to 20," or at whatever the market price may be. That is exactly what is done on board ship. A man takes an observation of the height of the sun to ascertain when it is 12 o'clock. He reports to the captain that it is 12 o'clock, and the captain says, "Well, make it so." If you had the power of Joshua you might be true bi-metallists. If you are going to take the existing ratio, then your proceedings are totally unnecessary; but if you are going to take something different from the market ratio, then you are going to disturb the whole commercial relations of the world. You cannot get out of that difficulty, which lies really at the bottom of the whole thing. I do not think it is at all a question which depends upon scientific disquisitions. I observe that upon the Royal Commission the men who have practical dealings with money were the men who pronounced against the bi-metallic theory. As far as I know, the principal authorities of the City of London conversant with dealings in money have condemned this experiment. When you are comparing our situation with that of other countries, you must remember that, in proportion to the greatness of our wealth and population, our wealth and prosperity depend in a far greater degree on foreign trade than do those of any other country in the world. The internal trade of America, Germany, and France is of much more importance than the foreign trade of those countries; but it is not so in the case of England. I believe the mono-metallic system which we have adopted is a sound system. It is the system under which we have prospered, and in which we have been followed by the other nations of Europe in very recent times. With Pitt, in that famous sentence of his, we may say of our financial system that "we have saved ourselves by our firmness, and Europe by our example." The nations of Europe have been disposed to follow the principles which have led to the great prosperity which has placed England upon a commercial pinnacle. I confess I should see any departure from that system with the greatest alarm. Occupying the position we do in the commerce of the world, I do not see how we are to go round to the nations of the world and enter into a sort of Dutch auction with them, in which we are to fix the ratio. Are we to go to one country and ask them what they want, and to another country and ask them what they want? Is it possible you are going to place the commerce of England in such a position as that? I will not say that that would be a most undignified position; but I think it would be a most dangerous one for a great commercial nation like England to occupy. I share with the right hon. Gentleman opposite the sympathy he expressed for the distress which has existed in Lancashire; but, as the right hon. Gentleman said, exports have increased to India, which shows that the relation between the gold of England and the silver of India has not prevented the increase of exports to the latter country. I find that in Lancashire there were in 1870 33,000,000 spindles at work, while in 1885 there were 40,000,000, and that the numbers of power looms in the same years were respectively 440,000 and 506,000. No doubt you might have hoped for, and we should have been glad to see, greater progress than that; but during the whole of that period the advance has been continuous, both as regards power looms and spindles. The same advance appears in the number of persons employed. In 1870 the total number of persons employed was 450,000, as against 504,000 in 1885. That does not look to me like a drooping or a ruined industry. Let us hope, then, as in former times of distress, so it will be now, that the period of distress may pass away, and that we may see, as we have seen before, times of reviving prosperity. Do not let us, after a few years of distress, overthrow that sound financial system which I believe has been the keystone of the prosperity of this great Empire.

*Mr. T. H. SIDEBOTTOM (Stalybridge): I do not often trouble the House with any observations; but, after deep study, I am convinced that this currency question is of such transcendent importance to every one of us, and so vitally affects every man and woman in this country, that I hope the House will allow me to make a few remarks. I was first induced particularly to consider this subject by the depression which began to make itself seriously and acutely felt in the general trade of the country, especially in the great cotton industry, in the year 1878. I was at that time Member for the large manufacturing constituency I have now the honour to represent; and being also myself an extensive cotton spinner and manufacturer I felt impelled, alike by duty to my constituents and by self-interest, to endeavour without prejudice, and with an entirely open mind, to investigate, and, if possible, find out what really lay at the root of the mischief. And I came then to the deliberate conclusion that our troubles were mainly to be ascribed to the suspension of the coinage of silver in France and the Latin Union, and the consequent fall, fluctuations, and uncertain value of that metal as measured by gold, and to the great appreciation of gold thereby caused. The subject at that time was but little appreciated or understood, and if a man ever mentioned bi-metallism he did so only with bated breath and whispered humbleness. But I entertained such a strong and decided opinion upon it that I ventured to bring the subject under the attention of this House in May, 1879, when, after alluding to the decreasing supply of gold, I stated that it seemed to my mind certain that the great depression throughout the world in nearly every interest and every trade was, to a great extent, due to the contraction of the currency caused by the demonetisation of silver, and the degradation of that metal to a mere commodity, such as iron, or tin, or lead; and, consequently, that the true remedy for our misfortunes—the true, plain, and direct way to revive our waning trade, to arrest the ruinous fall in property, and to bring back general prosperity—was to restore silver to its former position as a partner with gold in the currency of the world. This was more than 10 years ago, and my view has been strongly confirmed by everything which has since occurred. It would ill become me to occupy the time of the House by entering into a long dissertation on the details of this silver, or, rather, gold and silver question; every Member has had a copy of the final Report of the Royal Commission. The arguments on both sides are stated in this Report with perfect fairness, and considered, criticised, and dissected with consummate ability; and I venture to say that a more able and exhaustive treatise on the subject was never written. I have read it every word, and earnestly commend its perusal and study to every man who wishes to thoroughly grasp and comprehend the subject. He cannot then fail to form a clear conception of the evils brought upon us by the fundamental changes which have of late years taken place in our currency conditions, and will, I am sure, agree that the thanks of the country are owing to every member of that Commission. But whilst abstaining from entering into details, I hope the House will permit me briefly to consider a few of the aspects of this great question. From 1803 to 1873 the Mint of France was ready to convert into coin all silver brought to it, such coin being legal tender at a fixed ratio with gold of 15½ to 1; and in the States forming the Latin Union a similar law was in force from 1865 to 1873, the fixed ratio being also the same; that is, 15½ ounces of silver to 1 ounce of gold; therefore, no person possessing silver would, of course, part with it for less. This ratio virtually controlled the market, and, as a matter of fact, for the first 70 years of this century the extreme variation in the market value scarcely exceeded 3 per cent. in either direction; but in consequence of the large amount of silver coined in 1873, owing to the monetary changes in Germany, a Convention was entered into in January, 1874, between France and the States of the Latin Union, limiting the coinage; and the consequence was that silver went down in value from about 60d. per ounce to a little over 42d. or over 28 per cent.; and though it has now somewhat recovered, in consequence of the anticipated legislation in America, no one may say how much lower it is still destined to fall. I beg the House specially to note this fact. From the beginning of the century till 1873 the gold price of silver practically never varied, although the variations in the relative production of gold and silver were far greater during that period than they have been since or are ever likely to be again; but the marked divergence in value of the two metals only occurred when the free coinage of silver by the Mints of Europe ceased, but then began immediately. It must also be remembered in this connection that the precious metals do not perish as other commodities perish. Their aggregate accumulation in use at present is estimated at £1,900,000,000 of silver and £1,500,000,000 of gold; consequently a variation in their annual production constitutes merely a fractional difference of the whole. Concurrently also with France and the Latin Union closing their Mints to silver, there has been a tremendous falling off in the gold production of the world, just when a much larger quantity was required, and the result has naturally been a very great appreciation of gold. Previous to the discovery of the gold mines of California and Australia, the annual production of gold in the world was about £6,000,000; but these discoveries increased the supply six-fold, to £35,000,000 or £36,000,000, and the consequence was great and general prosperity, not to say inflation. It has now fallen, however, to under £20,000,000, whilst at the same time Germany has recently introduced a gold currency of £80,000,000, the United States have resumed specie payments requiring £100,000,000, Italy £20,000,000 for a like purpose, and £4,000,000 have gone annually to India; and the Mints of Europe having been also at this most inopportune moment closed to silver nearly half the money supply of the world has been cut off, and we have seen the natural effect in the decreased value of commodities and the heavy fall in property. But, with the permission of the House, I will endeavour to show a little more in detail the disastrous consequences which have resulted from this state of things, from this dislocation of silver and gold, and then indicate what seems to me the obvious remedy and the only course calculated to rescue our commerce from the ruin with which it is threatened. As has been well stated by the hon. Member for Flintshire, the total fixed charges payable out of the industry of the country are estimated at from £150,000,000 to £200,000,000 a year. Now as this is a permanent and fixed load, and gold is the scale by which the wealth of the country is measured, it is evident that if gold becomes dearer, if it appreciates, as it has done since the free coinage of silver was suspended in 1873, this tremendous load becomes greater and presses more heavily on the productive resources of the country. The appreciation of gold and the great fall in prices have, in fact, transferred about 10 per cent. of the wealth of the country to the money-lending and annuitant class, made a small class of rich people still richer, but robbed the hard working, toiling, industrious class for the benefit of those who toil not neither do they spin. It seems to me that both my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury and also the hon. Gentleman opposite are labouring under some confusion of ideas; because our belief and contention is that, under a system of bi-metallism, it would make no difference whatever whether debts were paid in gold or silver, for the two metals would have a relative fixed value to each other, and be mutually interchangeable at that value. No doubt contracts ought to be held sacred; but the right hon. Gentleman and others will not, I hope, forget that many contracts have been made under practically the same circumstances and conditions as those we wish to restore; and surely some sympathy ought to be spared for the unfortunate debtors who, during all these long years, have, as a matter of fact, been paying about one-third more than they expected or virtually contracted to pay. I entreat the House to consider, for a moment, the intolerable hardship which, quite unwittingly and without the least design or intention, has been inflicted on debtors and upon everyone who has charges of any description to pay. The debts and charges have been incurred under totally different conditions to those now existing, and when an entirely different state of things prevailed. The stupendous changes which have taken place in our monetary arrangements have been quite unforeseen and unexpected, and, of course, without the knowledge or assent of the unfortunate debtors; and yet there is but too much reason to fear that, in consequence of these changes, there is no prospect but absolute irretrievable ruin for many of these unfortunate persons. It is all very well to moralise and say people must take the consequences of their acts; that the laws of political economy must not be interfered with; the property and wealth and land of the country must change hands, and all the rest of it; but I think *the House will be of opinion that* if, without injury to anyone, something can be done to remedy or mitigate the injustice, and to bring back and restore the same conditions as approximately prevailed at the time the unfortunate debtors contracted their obligations, any legislation to accomplish this, however imperfectly, will be only equalled in its beneficence by its wisdom and justice. But I should like, with the permission of the House, to consider how and in what way our industries in this country are particularly affected, and also briefly to glance at the hardships and injury inflicted upon India. The two largest industries in this country are agriculture and the cotton trade. Much of the cotton trade is with India, or other silver using countries. In one portion of our own Empire, England, gold is the standard; in another portion, India, silver; and the difficulty of carrying on any satisfactory trade between the two under such conditions is very great indeed. There can be no doubt (as is stated in the Report) that an unstable and fluctuating exchange between gold and silver has tended to foster trade between countries having the same standard to the prejudice of those having a different standard; and English manufacturers have, in fact, had practically to pay the whole loss in the exchange by taking less price for their goods. It may be said—and this was, indeed, the argument of my right hon. Friend the leader of the House—how can this be so, with the large and increasing export of cotton goods to India? But the large exports are no proof to the contrary, for the production of Lancashire goods is so enormous, owing chiefly to the abuse of the Limited Liabilty Law, that they must go somewhere or our people starve; and they have long been sent to such markets as would consume them irrespective of cost, and in many cases at a continuous loss. The Indian trade has increased in spite of the difficulties in exchange owing to other causes; it has received a great impetus from the development of railways, the removal of the Import Duties, and similar matters; and at this moment it would doubtless have been far greater still if the exchange had remained steady, for it will be observed the same expansion of exports has not taken place with China, which is also a silver-using country, but *where there* has not been the same internal development. A few years ago, the Import Duties which were levied in India on cotton goods were felt to be an injury to Lancashire. Both employers and employed united against them, and they were happily abolished. They amounted to 5 per cent.; but the present state of the silver question, and the great fall in exchange, practically imposes a differential duty of nearly 30 per cent. upon Lancashire goods, as compared with goods manufactured in India. For example, if I, as an English manufacturer, send a piece of cloth to India for which to cover cost, I must receive back 10s.; and the Indian buyer pays, and has been in the habit of paying, 10s. for it, or in his money five rupees. When the exchange was at par, and the rupee worth 2s., I received my 10s.; but prices in India being about the same, and every single rupee there retaining the same purchasing power as before, the Indian buyer cannot afford to pay more than five rupees as at first, when the Exchange has fallen to 1s. 4d., which means 6s. 8d. for me instead of 10s. It would be indeed surprising if anyone possessing the hard head with which Lancashire men are generally credited could entertain the remotest doubt that if 3s. 4d. more was received for every piece of cloth sold at 10s. everyone in Lancashire would be proportionately benefited, for operatives, employers, agents, and merchants would have so much the more to divide amongst them. It may be argued that there really would not be this difference, because if the loss on the exchange was less the Indian buyer would then pay fewer rupees for the goods. Well, it is conceivable that the Indian buyer might secure a portion of the benefit; but even then, if he succeeded in obtaining his goods at a lower price, English manufacturers would be still benefited, because there would be an extended demand for our production as the rupee price was lowered, whilst it would be a distinct advantage to the consumer in India. But it may be said, why not invest the rupees paid for our goods in Indian produce and so recover with one hand what we lose with the other. Well, this may possibly be done by a few wealthy merchants who are prepared for such transactions; but it is not merchants who bear the loss, because, naturally, before purchasing and sending goods to India, or any other silver using country, a merchant ascertains and calculates how much he can realise home, and will only purchase the goods accordingly, and the greater the loss on the exchange the less he will pay; so that the real losers are English spinners and manufacturers, who are compelled to work their mills at any cost for the sake of keeping their people together, keeping down their very large fixed expenses, and finding employment for the manufacturing population of the country. It appears, therefore, that the loss in exchange amounts to a differential duty of about 30 per cent. in favour of the Indian manufacturer. He has already other advantages, owing to his geographical position, the low rate of wages paid, and the being allowed to work almost unlimited hours, whilst we in England are restricted to 56 hours; but these advantages, great as they are, are by no means equal to the other, and cannot explain the enormous increase which has taken place in Indian mills, because this increase has only occurred since the fall in the exchange became so pronounced, and when, as a matter of fact, the geographical advantage was lessened owing to the fall in freights. But that the English manufacturer has a real, tangible, and decided advantage is proved by the hard fact that the exports of cotton yarn from India to China, Hong Kong, and Japan during the last six or seven years have increased between 300,000,000lbs. and 400,000,000lbs., whilst the exports from England have decreased more than 30,000,000lbs. The natural consequence is that cotton mills are being erected on a colossal scale in India to the displacement of English mills and English labour; whilst one of the few industries in this country which seems to be in a really prosperous and healthy condition is that of machine making for filling Indian mills. I will not occupy the time of the House with enlarging upon the effects of these currency changes on British agriculture. No doubt the present disastrous state of that greatest of all our industries is owing to a combination and a variety of causes—virgin soils, railways, fast ocean steamers, and low freights, have brought heavily taxed land in this country into direct competition with the vast prairies of the Western World—but over and above and in addition to all these causes British agriculture has suffered most severely from this currency mischief. It is admitted by every one, except my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham (Mr. James Maclean) (at all events, the 12 Royal Commissioners are unanimous in saying so), that the purchasing power of the rupee in India is as great as ever; therefore, with the Indian exchange, about 1s. 4d., every British sovereign is worth really 15 rupees instead of 10; and the purchasing power of each single rupee being in India as great as ever, each one of them will purchase as much wheat in India as ever, consequently the buyer gets 15 rupees' worth of Indian wheat for a sovereign, instead of 10, or about half as much again as formerly. Comment on the above facts is needless; he who runs may read the principal cause which lies at the root of the depression in British agriculture, and may also with confidence predict what will be its fate in the not distant future unless something is done. Then, again, let us examine for a moment what is the effect upon India, and the taxpayers there, of the present state of affairs. As bearing on this point the opinion of the six Commissioners, who hesitate to adopt bi-metallism, is important. They say, in the Report, that—

> "The exceptional position of India causes it to be affected in an especial manner. Whilst its taxes are collected in silver a substantial portion of its outgoings, including the very heavy payments which have to be made in this country, are necessarily disbursed in gold. And they have no hesitation in expressing the conclusion that the changes in the relative value of the precious metals are causing important evils and inconvenience to the Government of India."

In other words, the Government of India owe in gold and collect the taxes in silver. Consequently, for every 16d. sent to England in payment of her debt, India, with the exchange at 16d., has to collect nearly 2s. Well, indeed, may we hear such disastrous accounts of the grinding taxation in India, and of the difficulty experienced by Indian statesmen in making receipts meet expenditures. A monstrous hardship and injustice is also inflicted upon retired officers, gentlemen of the Civil Service, and others, who having spent the best years of their lives in the service of their country in India, and returned home at last to end their days in their native land, find themselves mulcted of about one-third of their incomes from no fault, but simply from this currency disturbance. I would remind the House also that there is no security whatever that we have reached the bottom of the abyss, or that a further fall in silver may not any day be experienced, and a further discrepancy be established between the standard in India and the standard in England. Well, what is the remedy? I have already quoted part of the opinion of the six Commissioners who hesitate to adopt bi-metallism. These same gentlemen go on to say that—

> "No measure has been suggested that claims to be anything like so complete and thorough a remedy as the adoption of bimetallism; and that in any conditions fairly to be contemplated in the future, so far as they can forecast them from the experience of the past, a stable ratio might be maintained if bi-metallism were accepted and strictly adhered to."

I think the House will consider this pretty strong language as expressing the opinion of the six Commissioners who are supposed to be against bi-metallism, and it is extremely valuable as an answer to those who are making capital out of their supposed opposition. These six most able gentlemen, after hearing the evidence, after long consideration and study, and under deep responsibility, state their deliberate opinion that no remedy is so direct or effectual as bi-metallism, and think it would keep the value of silver uniform as compared with gold. Why, then, do they not take the plunge, and unite with their six remaining colleagues in recommending its prompt and early adoption! I can discover no reason except anxiety to avoid doing mischief, and groundless and chimerical apprehensions. Pausing, as it were, on the brink of a dark and unknown stream, they seem to ask themselves whither its broken and tempestuous waters lead, and shrink with halting tread from trusting themselves to its swift and foaming waves. I think, however, they have, in fact, admitted the whole case, and proved that the real, direct, true, and only remedy is that suggested by the other six Commissioners, namely, the assembling of an International Conference, with the view of establishing bi-metallism, that is, some fixed ratio between silver and gold. I do not wish to dogmatise, or to say what that ratio should be; it is essentially a matter for discussions, and for the consideration of any International Conference which may be appointed. There are many and strong arguments in favour of fixing it at the present value, of about 20 or 22 to 1, and others for the old ratio of 15½ to 1. But what I earnestly wish to press upon the attention of the House is that something should be done; that we should make some effort to remedy the present evils. Bi-metallism is nothing new; it existed in France for the whole of this century. Up to 1873 its effects were felt in all countries; and it is most significant that there should have been such unexampled depression in every industry simultaneously with the system coming to an end. We must expect strong, and powerful, and persistent opposition, particularly from the great financial houses, who own the gold, and want to retain it at its present value. But, after all, *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.* And I cannot believe that the people of this country will allow our industries to continue so heavily handicapped; but, in the long run, the interests of the many will prevail. England will join such a Conference as that we suggested, to thoroughly discuss and ventilate this great subject; and the collective wisdom of nations will devise a remedy, and fix a ratio of exchange between silver and gold which shall ensure stability, prevent violent fluctuations, and do something to restore prosperity to the long-suffering industries of the world.

*(9.17.) **Mr. HOYLE** (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): Mr. Speaker, I may perhaps be permitted to draw attention to the Amendment before the House—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the evils which have resulted from the divergence in the relative value of silver and gold following the monetary changes which took place in Europe in 1873, can best be dealt with by a Conference of the chief commercial nations of the world, called to consider whether a bi-metallic system can be re-established by international agreement in the interests of all the nations concerned."

That does not go so far as the Report of the Royal Commission, signed by my right hon. Friend the Member for the London University, that a bi-metallic system can be established. I believe that this is what the Commissioners agreed to, that in any conditions fairly to be contemplated, so far as we can forecast them from experience of the past, a suitable ratio might be maintained.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): I am sure my hon. Friend does not wish to misrepresent me. I have already pointed out, in the course of the debate, that Mr. Birch and I dissented from that opinion.

*Mr. HOYLE: In that case the Blue Book has been misprinted. I find Sir John Lubbock's name appended to the Report, and also that of Mr. J. W. Birch, ex-Governor of the Bank of England. It is quite true that these two gentlemen did add a foot note:—

> "No doubt the adhesion of England, Germany, and the United States would be of very important additional strength, and we do not deny that such combination might for a considerable time be able to maintain the ratio adopted. Having regard, however, to the great uncertainty as to the probable future production of the mines, and to the use of the precious metals in the arts of a number of countries which would still remain outside the combination, we doubt whether any given ratio can be found maintainable."

It seems to me that foot note shows an uncertain condition of mind which is hardly worthy of my right hon. Friend.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK: May I just explain? It is usual, if you agree with the bulk of a Report, to sign it stating the points on which you differ. There was no hesitation on my part, or on that of my friend Mr. Birch.

*Mr. HOYLE: I acquit my right hon. Friend of all blame, and accept his explanation. Before we can understand the evils to which the Motion refers, we must consider the condition of things that prevailed before the "divergence" took place. It is, of course, well-known to the House that, previous to 1873, this country enjoyed great prosperity. Industry and commerce flourished, and the National Revenue went up by "leaps and bounds." The summit of that prosperity was reached in 1874, concurrently with great alterations on the Continent of Europe in the currency. The decline of prosperity affected all trades; and agriculture has suffered severely during the last 16 years. I hope hon. Members acquainted with agriculture will tell us whether farms have been unlet and unlettable, whether fields have remained untilled, and whether land has tumbled down to grass and weeds; whether farmers, gathering up their little possessions and taking what remained of their property, have gone, with their trained skill, to other lands; and whether labourers, biding for a time, have finally gone to the large towns and seaports to swell the ranks of casual and unskilled labour? But perhaps I may speak of the staple industry of the county from which I come — Lancashire. Before 1873, merchants, in exporting Manchester goods, either sent them out in the grey state, or had them bleached, dyed, or printed, according to circumstances. In most cases a bill was drawn against the shipment which put the shipper into funds, but it was only when the goods were sold abroad, and the proceeds remitted home to close the transaction, that the merchant and those who joined him in the venture were able to count up their gains. When silver fell and the rate of exchange dropped the merchants could not carry on that mode of doing business because of the losses entailed. Either manufacturers must consign the goods themselves, or their correspondents in foreign countries must send orders at a fixed and certain price. Native indents, as they are called, that is, orders to buy goods laid down in India or China, in stated months, became the rule. A merchant receiving such an order first ascertained at what rate a banker would undertake to fix exchange six or nine months ahead. He then reckoned freight, brokerage, commissions, and other charges, and, after deducting all these from the silver price offered, the balance left was all that could be bid to the manufacturer as the price for the goods. The method of doing business was completely revolutionised. The rate of exchange became the dominating factor. An East India merchant, whose principal business is that of exporting cotton from India to various European countries, in giving evidence to the Commission, fully detailed the features of the old and new systems of conducting that business, and gave illustrations of the rise and fall in prices owing to oscillations in the rate of exchange. The following questions were put to him from the Chair:—

"What I want to know is whether the rapid alteration in the value of cotton in India due to the exchange is or is not pernicious to the trade?—It rose rapidly before August in consequence of one alteration in the exchange; it fell rapidly after August in consequence of another alteration in the exchange.

"Is not that a great inconvenience to the grower in India?"—Well, of course to the grower fluctuations are to that extent unpleasant. For the exporter it practically makes no difference. We have only to wait a little till prices adjust themselves.

"You simply work the machine by which the cotton is transferred from the grower in India to the buyer in England?—Certainly. . . .

"You have just explained that the machine is practically so perfect that you receive no violent shock from even the most violent oscillations in exchange. What I want to know is whether these violent oscillations do not do harm to the grower, to the man who is not part of the mere machinery of transfer, but the man who produced the goods?—Well, of course if the price of silver rises rapidly the grower does not like it. If we have a fall in silver and are able to offer him 10 or 15 per cent. more for his produce he likes it very much."

"It is in your power, directly you see that operations are not going to yield a profit, to stop operations?—Certainly........"

Now, what struck me as very remarkable in that evidence was that the witness was apparently quite unconscious of the startling character of his evidence. The swing of the exchange pendulum, owing to rises and falls in silver, made a difference in the selling price of commodities of 15 per cent. first on one side, and then 15 per cent. on the other. The skinning of eels is unpleasant to the eels, but to the man who holds the knife it makes no difference—he need not cut his own finger; it is his own fault if he does. The House will see that this witness proves beyond a doubt that commodities rise or fall in value as the rate of exchange goes up or down. If there were any doubt, however, it would be dispelled by the testimony of another witness—a shipper of manufactured goods from this country to India. He said, in answer to a question put to him—

"Any one acquainted with the Manchester Market can testify that business there is always checked when a fall in silver takes place, and that Manchester prices have generally ultimately to give way.

"But the one person that cannot save himself is the manufacturer?—He is the worst on the whole.

"The merchant can save himself, but the manufacturer cannot?—Yes."

As exchange fell there was always a diminished amount left for the English manufacturer? The "machine" was perfect. "The merchant," it was expressly said in evidence, "need take no risk unless he liked." The loss was bound to fall on the producers. The "machine" stops until, to use the euphemism employed by one of the witnesses, "prices had adjusted themselves," which means that until commodities had fallen in price equal to the fall in silver. But while this evil was in development, others were in progress. The depression in the agricultural districts at home lessened the demand for cotton goods, and falling prices automatically raised the barriers to trade in Protectionist countries, in this way—a fixed duty of 2s. 6d. on an article that formerly cost 10s. was 25 per cent., but when the article fell to 7s. 6d., the duty became 33 per cent.; and if it fell to 5s., the duty was then 50 per cent. Diminished demand from the United Kingdom and an aggravation of Protection shut Lancashire out of the markets, previously supplied; and so arose the cry for "new markets." The home trade could not absorb its usual quantity of goods; Protectionist countries were closed by the automatic rise in the proportion of duty; but India and China were open at a price, they could take unlimited quantities of cotton fabrics, so that the production was more and more poured into Eastern markets. That increased supply compelled English producers to accept silver prices. In addition to those adverse circumstances it began to be perceived that cotton spinning and manufacturing could be carried on in the East without loss by exchange. The greater the fall in the exchangeable value of the rupee, the greater the inducement to cut out English made goods, and thus an expansion of spinning and weaving occurred in India, such as has never been paralleled in any industry requiring technical skill. The profits made in Indian cotton mills are so large that they work on Sundays as well as week days. Some of them run 84 hours a week, and the average is a little over 80 hours a week, as against 56½ hours in this country. Rich English capitalists and rich Indian capitalists are adding to their wealth by these means. Let me say that I believe it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a man in Lancashire who would lift a finger against the prosperity of India or retard the welfare of her people. If India has geographical or any other advantages she is entitled to make the most of them, and it is clearly our duty to assist her in making the most of them. The welfare of India and the bettering of the condition of her people are British interests. In reference to the cotton industry in India, the Royal Commissioners say—

> "Estimates have been laid before us which tend to show that the Indian manufacturer, if unassisted by exchange considerations, would be unable to compete with the English manufacturer successfully in any market. The technical character of the questions involved in these calculations makes it very difficult to pronounce an opinion on the subject, but we understand that a Committee of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce has been carefully considering the question, and that their conclusions, which, on such a point, will have a special value, will shortly be made public."

The following is a copy of the Resolution of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce requesting the Board to undertake the inquiry referred to by the Royal Commissioners—

> "That in view of the recent very rapid increase of cotton spinning in India and the exports of yarn therefrom, more especially to China and Japan, while at the same time there has been a very serious check to the growth of Lancashire yarn exports to those countries, the directors be requested to examine and report to a special meeting of the Chamber as to the causes and circumstances which have thus enabled Bombay spinners to supersede those of Lancashire."

That inquiry extended over 10 months, and the most competent men in the different branches of the trade were invited to give evidence. In such an investigation, conducted by laymen, great scope was, as is usual, given to witnesses. There was a good deal of theory, of opinion, and of argument which were entitled to great respect, even when they failed to carry conviction; but when the witnesses detailed their daily experiences, and gave facts within their own knowledge, their testimony was absolutely unimpeachable. A witness who has, perhaps, sold more cotton yarn than any man living, said—

> "The great factor which has comparatively taken away an important section of our trade is the fall in exchange. It is utterly impossible, with the silver price of exchange, for the Lancashire man, when his money is reduced 25 per cent., in exchanging from silver to gold, to rival the Bombay man, his competitor, whose money is not reduced in value."

And the witness went on to say—

> "The demand never stopped in the spring of 1887, although we were unable to take orders

> during the months of March and April, and until the third week in May, when we accepted a reduction in price equivalent to the fall in exchange."

The "machine" does its work so effectually that prices must go down in Manchester. The mills may stop, of course, and that is the alternative. So large are the quantities of goods sold to silver-using countries that prices all round are lowered. There cannot be two prices for the same article—one for gold-using countries and another for silver-using countries. If any one demand, either home or foreign, yields better Returns than another, there is an immediate increase of supply, with a corresponding decrease of supply to those markets giving less favourable results, and thus a level of prices all round is quickly reached. The Board of the Manchester Chamber concluded its inquiry, but, not being agreed, two Reports were prepared. A copy of the evidence taken and copies of the two Reports were sent to each member of the Chamber, and a special meeting was called to consider the Reports. After full discussion, the Chamber adopted the Report, which said that—

> "The principal cause which has enabled Bombay spinners to supersede those of Lancashire in exporting yarn to China and Japan is the great fall in Eastern exchange since 1873."

Therefore, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, being largely expert, after an exhaustive inquiry extending over 10 months, decided that conflicting currency laws in the same Empire were giving a bonus for the transfer of a great industry of that Empire from one part of its dominion to another. Another evil arising out of the divergence between gold and silver is the lowering of the quality of English goods. It is rare to find now any make of cotton goods that has retained the character it had 20 years ago. Mr. Stephen Williamson, M.P., told the Royal Commission that merchants did not wish to ship inferior goods, but he said the people in silver-using countries had small silver coins in common use, and when the exchangeable value of these coins fell there must, of necessity, be a lower article supplied. On this point an East India merchant, who was a witness at the inquiry in Manchester, was most explicit. He said—

> "We find it difficult, and, indeed, often impossible, to raise prices. The general experience is that when exchange falls the Indian buyer reduces his sterling price to us here, and we have naturally to offer a lower price to our producer. If exchange falls, say, from 1s. 5d. to 1s. 4d., which is a fall of 6 per cent., the native buyer reduces his price to us accordingly, and it is needless to say that we cannot execute such an order. Possibly several telegrams pass between us, entailing expense, and the transaction may possibly be ultimately arranged by a pick or two picks being taken out of the cloth, or a narrower width being taken, or a yard or more being taken off the length; and at the same time the maker may have to cut into his profit, and the agent into his commission, all in order that an article may be supplied to come in at the current rupee price. Some shippers, less scrupulous than others, may stamp the goods the original length, though possibly a yard has been taken off them, and in this way false stamping has been encouraged."
>
> "You don't think it is the fall in Exchange that brings this about?—I have said that it is the fall in Exchange that creates the difficulty, and this is how the difficulty is frequently overcome."

Another way of cheapening cost is loading the yarn with size containing china, clay, and chemicals. Formerly it was considered that about 20 per cent. of size was sufficient to give strength to the yarn in weaving. One day, on my way to business, I was joined by a manufacturer, who complained bitterly of the unremunerative state of trade. I said to him—

> "You size heavily, I believe?—Oh, no, he said. We only put 100 per cent. on, and some of our neighbours put 200 per cent. on."

So that 100 lbs. of cotton yarn is loaded with 200 lbs of filling, which must fall off in the washtub, leaving the web as thin as paper and as easily torn. Heavy sizing compels the saturation of weaving factories with steam to soften the yarn and make it weave. The operatives complained that their health was being destroyed, and last year they had a Bill drafted in the hope that Parliament would remedy the evil. Eventually, a Conference was held in the Grand Committee Room to consider the draft Bill—a Conference consisting of seven Members of Parliament and equal numbers of representatives of the operatives and of the employers. In the discussion that took place the difficulties of the position on both sides were pointed out. One of the speakers on the part of the employers said the trade now was such that "a manufacturer could not live if he made honest cloth." The changed condition in which the trade is carried on will be seen if I read what a Manchester merchant said before the Manchester Chamber. He was asked—

> "If a Manchester merchant sells yarn in China for 500 dollars, and a Bombay merchant also sells yarn for 500 dollars, quantity and quality being equal in both cases, what loss does the Manchester merchant sustain in getting his money home?"

And the reply was "None."

> "Do you mean that the Manchester merchant will get the same money home as does the Bombay merchant?"—Assuming, without entering into calculations, that those 500 dollars return to the Lancashire merchant £75, whereas they formerly returned him £100, and that those £75 will purchase him as many commodities as £100 did formerly, he would lose nothing."

The question was put in another form and the witness answered in these words:—

> "Take the case of my own trade. I am a merchant carrying on business in Bombay and Manchester, and I am to-day doing the very business which you instance, because I am shipping yarns and cloth from Bombay to China and Japan, and also from Manchester to the same markets. In the latter case I get 25 per cent. less gold for the same quantity of yarn than I formerly did, say £75 instead of £100; but that lessened quantity of gold will buy me as many commodities as the £100 would in former days. At the same time, in Bombay I get back my money in rupees, say 1,000, the same number that I got in former days; but these rupees will only buy me the same commodities that they did in former days. Therefore the purchasing power of the two remittances is equal, for I get as much of all that I consume and require, as a merchant, for my appreciated gold—that is, for the smaller number of sovereigns at home—as I do in Bombay for the unaltered number of rupees. I consequently sustain no loss as a merchant on my remittance from China."

That evidence is lucidity itself—it is a volume in few words—the merchant, the middleman suffers no loss—it is passed on to the English producer. The Bombay manufacturer carries on his trade in circumstances analogous to those which prevailed in this country before 1873, but the English manufacturer is worse off by the loss of 25 per cent in exchange. Why does not the English manufacturer pass the loss on? Well, part of it was passed on. Coals and mill stores were cheaper. Cotton, too, was lower and wages were reduced. The last thing an employer likes to do is to reduce wages. Ill-feeling always follows the attempt. Some years ago Bolton, Blackburn, and other places in East Lancashire suffered from an embittered struggle on a reduction of wages. An excited mob broke into the house of Colonel Raynsford Jackson, who was the President of the Manufacturers' Association, and burned his house to the ground. In that struggle the operatives on strike, or locked out, lost in wages nearly £790,000 before the strike ended, and then they went in at the reduction. At no period during the last 15 years have reductions in cost of manufacture been equal to the fall in values of cotton goods, and now the lessened costs of manufacture have, in great part, passed away. Coals have risen, wages have risen, cotton is higher, because it can be and is consumed in other countries where exchange troubles do not exist. Another evil from the divergence between gold money and silver money is that the inception of business is transferred to foreign markets, and necessitates long contracts. A witness at the Royal Commission was asked—

> "Question 2283.—Is it the case that this fluctuation in exchange leads to bargains being made on contract for future delivery rather than to immediate transactions?—Yes, it has changed the whole nature of business.
>
> Question 2284.—And these contracts are fulfilled after a certain time, and during that time accidents may occur?—Yes, formerly the man who sent the goods abroad was really a merchant.
>
> Question 2285.—He is now simply a middleman?—He is now a middleman and tries to keep himself in that position."

Mr. Provand, M.P., describing before the Royal Commission the cost, the uncertainties, and risks of the new mode of doing business, said: "It makes it a speculative gambling business in fact." The long contracts for yarns and piece goods necessitated by the new system lead to gambling in raw cotton. Speculators can afford to pay, and do pay, well for early information. No sooner are contracts placed in Manchester than speculators put their hands on raw cotton; the shipping merchant may also buy cotton simultaneously with his purchases of yarns and goods; for him, with accurate knowledge of contracts placed, it is a safe speculation. So the spinner or manufacturer may find there are three buyers of raw cotton against one transaction in the manufactured article.

In that way "cotton corners" are made. Mr. Henry Lee, formerly M.P. for Southampton, and now President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, in his review of the trade of 1889 at the annual meeting of the Chamber in February of this year, said—

> "He believed the manufacturers of the present day were not obtaining what they had a right to expect from the capital they had invested. The wages paid were considerable, but the amount of profit arising from the investment of capital was not large. This was due to several causes. . . . There was gambling in shares, gambling in Stocks, gambling in cotton, gambling in almost everything that could be touched. He quite remembered the time, when he was young, when those things did not exist, and their forefathers would have been horrified at the spirit of speculation which prevailed at the present day."

These are only part of the evils to which this Motion calls the attention of the House. There is no country in the world where the cotton trade is carried on under such unfavourable economic conditions as exist in this country. In all other countries the investment of capital is encouraged. In this country such investment of capital is discouraged by the conflict of monetary laws in the same Empire. There is no other country where the returns for capital and labour employed in the cotton trade are so uncertain as they are in England. We are told we want Protection. What is the meaning of the word "Protection" when used in relation to trade and commerce? It means a tax laid on an article at the port of entry which shall make it difficult for foreigners to compete with home producers. Arbitrary and artificial interference with the sale of commodities affect prices far beyond what the actual amount of interference would seem to warrant. The article of foreign origin being taxed at the port of entry home producers get higher prices, not only by the amount of the tax, but also from the lessened supply. The whole community gives up part of its earnings to increase the income of a section. That is Protection. What is happening to the cotton trade at this moment? Take the case of sales in China of Indian goods for 500 dollars, and of English goods for a like sum, as published in the Manchester evidence. China is a neutral market—open to all on equal terms, and the China merchant has paid equal amounts. The Bombay man gets his money home in full weight and count, but the Manchester man loses 25 per cent. by exchange. Where has the loss gone to? Who has got it? Part of it has been paid to the banker for the risk he has taken in fixing exchange forward. Mr. Provand, M.P., told the Royal Commissioners the bankers' charges on China business were equal to a rate of 12 per cent. per annum for the use of the money, and he had known it to be equal to interest at the rate of 15 and 20 per cent. per annum; but even then the risks and losses were so great that bankers derived only small profits from that class of business. Part of the loss goes in those commissions to bankers, and the remainder of the loss goes in the fall of produce. Falling exchange works both ways—in lowering the price of exports and in lowering the price of imports. Produce to pay for our exports is sold here, and consumed by the whole community. The manufacturer has had 25 per cent. knocked off the value of his goods, and the community has got it. Operatives and their employers have done the work, and the community has got 25 per cent. of their wages. If that had been done of set purpose, we should have given it a hard name. But it is an accident. It came out of the Franco-German War. Not one of the actors on either side of that great war had the remotest idea of what was coming. The last thing they intended was to cripple the industries of the world, but grievously crippled they have been. In saying that one portion of the community— and that the toiling portion of the community—ought not to be robbed of the fruits of their toil, are we Protectionists? Producers are the victims of monetary vivisection. But it is said we are a creditor country. What made us so? The ancient Britons were not creditors of anybody; then, how have we become a creditor country? The inventive faculty possessed by the people of this country, the adaptation of machinery to the varied industries, has so multiplied the power of the individual to produce as to give us the position we hold as the first commercial nation in the world. Improvements in machinery have enabled the same, or a fewer, number of workers to produce more goods of a better quality and at a smaller cost. At the same time, the hours of labour have been lessened, and higher wages earned for fewer hours. That seems strange, and yet it is true. The eight hours' day will come that way, to the advantage of both masters and men. A striking illustration of this great gain took place in the woollen trade. When wool combing was done by hand it was laborious to the workers and injurious to the fibre of the wool; but now, by the aid of the combing machine, invented by Mr. Isaac Holden, M.P., 20 persons can produce more and better combed wool than 2,000 persons could do before. The world has gained more by that invention than if Mr. Holden had discovered a gold mine. Every day's working of a gold mine brings the mine nearer to exhaustion, but every day's working of new inventions of machinery educates the workers and stimulates the mind, which is the mainspring of all production, and so every mechanical invention becomes the parent of others. The inventive faculty in our people is practically without limit. We owe it to Watt, Arkwright, Hargreaves, Kay, Stephenson, Faraday, Wheatstone, Brunel, Bessemer, Holden, and their coadjutors and successors that we are a creditor nation. These men took the forces of Nature and turned them into beneficent activity for the use of man. The power of this country to produce was never greater than now. That power is growing, and, with technical education in all our towns and villages, will grow. We are a nation of producers. Our power to produce is practically unlimited, but the power of each individual to consume is limited by Nature herself. The improvements in shipbuilding and in the management of ships continually lessen the cost of transport, so that distance from the supply of raw material is of less and less consequence. What we want, above all things, is the free interchange of services with other nations. If we permit impediments to the exchange of services to grow up we shall kill the bird that lays the golden eggs. The world is waiting for what we can supply in such abundance. You may cover China with railways and build iron bridges over her rivers. You may supply a network of iron roads over India. The natural wealth of those countries, released by those appliances, will pay you back in full measure, and almost without stint. It would be hard to say whether they or we would reap most benefit from the exchange of products. Just and equitable means of exchange would enable us to render service to each other. The House was greatly interested yesterday in listening to the Budget speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Budget for a year of returning prosperity. I hold in my hand a letter from a leader of a Trades Union. The writer is a man of high character; he has received distinguished marks of confidence from successive Governments. And this is what he writes to me in respect to workpeople in the cotton trade in the generally prosperous year of 1889. After careful inquiry by himself and his colleagues, he says—

> "They find that owing to stoppages of machinery and irregularity of employment in the cotton trade last year the operatives lost in wages alone £265,000."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has the administration of a national estate which has no equal in any other country; but give the Chancellor of the Exchequer fair-play. Give agriculture, give iron and steel, and all the industries into which they enter, fair-play; and then the producers of this country could pay off the National Debt without feeling it. What does the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Flint propose? Simply this—to follow up the work of the Royal Commission by taking part in a Conference of the nations of the world. That is all. The last words of the Motion govern the whole. The Conference would consider whether bimetallism can be re-established in the interest of all the nations concerned. There can surely be no danger of peril to English interests in such a Conference. The Conference would come at an opportune time. The world is awakening to the importance of a good understanding between nations. The recent Conference held at Berlin was described by Cardinal Manning, who can look back on 80 years of an eventful life, as one of the greatest events of our time. Whatever may ultimately come out of the deliberations of that Conference, it must surely be regarded as an acknowledgment that no nation is so self-contained, so self-sufficient as to have no need of other nations. The summoning of the Berlin Conference is an acknowledgment of the truth that we are all members one of another. It is but 40 years since the Prince Consort of England suggested the holding of a Great Exhibition in Hyde Park to which all nations were invited to send their best industrial products; and now the German Emperor, the grandson of the Prince Consort, invites the great Powers of Europe to join him in trying to improve the condition of those whose lot is that of manual labour. It may well be that the Emperor sees that the policy of "blood and iron" has had its day, and that there are surer ways to national weal than by breechloading guns and magazine rifles. For many years a dark cloud has hung over Continental Europe threatening to burst in war of unprecedented magnitude. The Emperor of Germany, by means of the Berlin Conference, may have set forces in motion which shall disperse that dark cloud and bring us nearer to the time when military burdens shall cease to weigh upon and oppress peaceful industry. The hon. Member for Flint invites the House to assent to the holding of a still greater Conference—a Conference of the chief commercial nations of the world—to consider whether it is possible to devise means whereby all nations may exchange the products of labour without waste and loss. The saving of waste leaves a large margin for profit. Naval engineers and telegraphists have brought nations ever closer and closer together. May not the best minds of every nation, meeting in Council, complete the work by insuring that people everywhere shall gather and enjoy the fruits of their own industry? It would be a Peace Congress of the greatest magnitude, and if successful its beneficial results to all countries would make for "Peace on earth and goodwill among men."

*(9.52.) SIR LYON PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): Before I proceed to deal with the Resolution proposed by the hon. Member for Flint, I should like to show how shorn and bald it is compared with that Tabled last year by the Minister for Agriculture. The original form of his Resolution gave much condensed instruction to the House, and was bold as to its assertions. It began by saying that the recent divergence in the price of the precious metals

> "Is prejudicial in the highest degree to the finances and the Government of India, and is detrimental to our trade with the silver-using countries."

It then suggested that the recent and prolonged depression of trade and agriculture, and the irregularity of employment "for vast numbers of the population," was largely owing to the changes in the value of gold and silver. In the speeches which followed the Resolution we were told that the prices of commodities were lowered and that the wages of the people were reduced. That redundant Resolution and the commentaries upon it left the House in no doubt of the views of the bi-metallists. Though that was the character of the Resolution Tabled by the Minister of Agriculture in its passage from the Table to the Chair, some experienced Parliamentary hand seems to have pruned it of all its reasons, and left it in that mild and unassertive form in which it is again offered to-day. The present Resolution assumes that "evils" still exist, though it is not stated what they are. Trade has improved, and the prices of commodities have risen considerably, in spite of the alleged scarcity of gold and the disuse of a silver standard abroad. The chief depression which still exists is in agriculture. The reason is that farmers still keep to the domestic character of their production. All other industries have reorganised their methods in the last 20 years in order to adapt themselves to the changed conditions of production and distribution. Last year the Resolution declared that the divergence in prices of gold and silver was highly detrimental to India. There was some support for that statement in an almost despairing Despatch from the Governor General in September, 1886. The cry of despair was taken up by the Minister of Agriculture, who said—

> "India is suffering most severely from the present state of things; and if there be any further fall in the price of silver, which is certain to occur unless effectual steps are taken to arrest it, India will be brought to the verge of ruin and bankruptcy."

That Cassandra prophecy of woe was given in December, 1888. The divergence in prices still exist, but these wails of despair were changed into a song of triumph by the Finance Minister of India, Mr. Steel, in a Report made to the Government in 1889, in which he said—

> "We have reason to look forward with hope to the future of agriculture, the great stand-by of the Empire; it is flourishing as it never flourished before. The manufacturing interests are prospering and developing to the great benefit of the country. Trade is growing in magnitude; communications are being rapidly improved. Our debt, though large, is amply covered by the value of State property."

Imports from and exports to India have largely increased since 1873 and to a less extent in other silver countries, and are especially large in the Argentine Republic. It was prophesied that on account of the difficulties of exchange no more capital would be sent to India for improvements. As a fact, we increased our loans to that country by £15,000,000 between 1880 and 1888. To-night the Movers of the Resolution have abandoned their old selected battle-field of India and have chiefly referred to the influence of the changed currency on Lancashire, especially as recent Returns show a falling off in the exports of cotton goods to the East, although that is coincident with a rise, not a fall, in the price of silver. Sudden fluctuations in exchange are, no doubt, harassing to all commerce, but a persistent low rate of exchange can always be provided for by any merchant of experience. He buys goods at gold prices, and knows exactly the exchange value of the silver which he gets by the sale of his goods. But I am not surprised at the working man—I will not say being deluded, because I believe in the utmost sincerity of the bi-metallists and their views on these questions—but I am not surprised that the working man hearing the arguments of the Bi-metallist Association, and having them over and over again, comes to believe that this state of low wages and want of employment during the time of depression arises from these causes. They saw that mills were rising in India. What has led to cotton spinning in India? It has been conclusively proved that the value of the rupee has not fallen in India. It is the possession by that country of cotton—the raw material of the industry—and the cheap labour of the workers which fully accounts for India entering into competition with Lancashire goods. It is in the highest degree doubtful whether the divergence of gold and silver in Europe has anything to do with manufactures in the East. Those who oppose bi-metallism deny that trade depends upon metallic currency. Trade rests upon barter, and anything which profoundly alters production and distribution of commodities necessarily acts upon it. Soon after 1873, there was a great development of railways in the United States and India. At that time also the Suez Canal worked a transformation in commerce. It gave an enormous impulse to steam navigation, especially when duplex engines were introduced, and large existing fleets, both of sail and steam, were swept away as antiquated. Trade had to adapt itself to new routes and conditions of traffic. While commerce was being transformed, production in manufactures was vastly increased, and it became larger than the consumption. It took time for the world to adapt itself to the changed conditions, and that period was marked by depression of trade. I cannot say what are the cardinal doctrines of faith of bi-metallists at the present time, but I know that up to a recent period one of them was that the scarcity of gold has produced its appreciation, in consequence of which the prices of commodities fell. I admit that this view has received a considerable amount both of direct and indirect support from the unfortunate manner in which the Royal Commission reported. Undoubtedly, in recent years, various States have increased their gold coinage and lessened that of silver. Where has been the sign of scarcity of gold? Silver has been displaced, but gold has flowed in with perfect ease to supply it. The stoppage of the legal ratio by the Latin Union in 1873 did not demonetise silver; it simply altered the distribution of silver coins. Between 1876 and 1880 the silver coined reached the enormous total of £129,500,000, about 40 per cent. higher than when the legal ratio was kept up by the Latin Union. To speak of the "consequent demonetisation of silver" in the face of such increasing silver coinage is an absurdity. When the main argument for bi-metallism is the scarcity and consequent appreciation of gold, surely we may call upon its advocates to tell us what they mean by scarcity, and to give us proofs that it exists. Scarcity in commodities such as grain or cotton means that there is an insufficient quantity for consumption. But gold, though it wastes a little by use, does not disappear in consumption; it only circulates. When does gold become so scarce as to appreciate in value and lower the prices of commodities? On the other hand, under what conditions does it become so abundant as to depreciate in value and to raise the prices of commodities? There must be some happy medium between abundance and scarcity when it neither lowers nor raises prices. These are fundamental questions which ought to be answered by those who seek to alter our monetary system. There are definitions in abundance as to the amount of money which a man ought to possess. Locke and Petty put it as one-fiftieth or fifty-second part of the annual wages or half the annual rent of land. I do not desire to fix upon the bi-metallists either of these definitions, for times have changed; but I cannot argue on scarcity or abundance of gold without some proof or explanation of what the terms mean. I admit that business is done with a much smaller quantity of gold than was deemed necessary 20 years ago. Other nations are now imitating our banking system, and the transference of coin from hand to hand is greatly economised by instruments of credit. The liabilities of our banks to the public amount to £621,000,000, or nearly the figure of the National Debt; but the amount of coin or bullion to meet this liability is only about £35,000,000, or, if we deduct from each side of the account the £8,000,000 locked up in the Notes Department of the Bank of England, it is £27,000,000, or only 4½ per cent. of the liabilities. What would have been scarcity 20 years ago would be perplexing abundance now. The last stronghold of the bi-metallists is that France for 70 years, aided by the Latin Union for eight of those years, maintained a fixed ratio of gold and silver at 1 to 15½. There was no inherent virtue in that ratio. When it was established in the ninth year of the Revolution, that happened to be the market price of silver. To propose to rehabilitate it now when the ratio is as 1 to 20, is a very serious proposal. But it is not true that France coined gold and silver indifferently at 1 to 15½ during 70 years, that is, from 1803 to 1873. The market prices showed constant variations from ½ to 3 per cent., and sometimes much more. Free coinage, which was the essence of a bi-metallic system, became impossible under these fluctuations, and for 50 out of the 70 years it did not exist except to a limited extent. When gold was cheap gold coinage was encouraged; when silver was cheap that was coined chiefly. Thus, from 1821 to 1850, or for 30 years, silver was 2 per cent. cheaper than gold, and France coined 87½ per cent. of silver and only 12½ of gold. In the next 20 years ending 1870, gold fell under the legal value, and the Mints of France, and later of the Latin Union, only coined 10 per cent. of silver, while they coined 90 per cent. of gold. So that during 30 years France was practically mono-metallic on the basis of silver, with gold at a premium; and in the next 20 years she was practically still mono-metallic, but on the basis of gold. In fact, though France was bi-metallic in law, she was practically mono-metallic in practice for at least 50 out of the 70 years. During the 50 years when the coinage was practically mono-metallic, a far more powerful law than the Bi-metallic Law came into operation. This was the Gresham Law, by which the metal, overrated on the ratio, forced the dear metal out of the market. It was this law, and not German silver, which broke down the Latin Union when silver became abundant and fell in price. Silver having become cheaper, the Gresham Law forced it into coinage. A legal ratio is only possible on two conditions (1) that the Mints are the dominant buyers and use most of the annual product in coinage; and (2) when that product is moderate in quantity. The legal ratio broke down because the artifice by which France held it up could no longer bear the strain. But silver was coined in much greater quantity than at any previous period. The increase of silver coin was 54 per cent. greater in the five years ending 1875 than in the preceding five years. What Germany did was to call in her miscellaneous coin and issue uniform coins of gold and silver. The silver in the Bank reserves and that hoarded by the Government was thrown on the market, and, no doubt, influenced the prices on a falling market. From 1873 to 1879 Germany sold silver to the amount of £28,357,000, or an average of £4,000,000 annually.

It was soon absorbed by the coining nations, which required, and did coin annually more than double the amount of silver thrown by Germany on the market. The production of both gold and silver since 1873 has been greater than at any period of the world's history. Before the Californian discoveries, the annual mean product of gold never exceeded 20,000 kilogrammes; now it is eight times as much, or 160,000. Silver has not increased in the same proportion. The mean annual product of silver for the 70 years when the legal ratio prevailed was 838,000 kilogrammes, but the mean annual product since that date has been above 2,500,000, and is now about 3,000,000. Formerly the Mints coined nearly all the gold produced, and when the goldsmith wanted it for his art he melted down sovereigns. But now the supply of gold is far in excess of the demands for coinage, which steadily decrease. In the decade ending 1860 gold was cheap, so the Gresham Law forced 81 per cent. of the annual product into the coinage of the world. In the next decade ending 1870 gold was becoming dearer, and only 54 per cent. of the product was coined. In the decade ending 1880, 45 per cent. was used for coinage, and in the last five years of Soetbeer's Tables, ending 1885, only 23 per cent. was used for coin. At least 75 per cent. of the annual product of gold is no longer used for coin. How is it that gold has kept up its value and that silver has fallen? The reason is obvious. There is a demand for gold outside that of the Mints, for industrial purposes, for bullion, and hoarding, which takes 75 per cent. of the produce. About 60 per cent. seems to be used in the Arts. Silver, on the other hand, is chiefly valuable for coinage, industrial uses scarcely amounting to 27 per cent. of the product. Unfortunately, its use in Arts is not extending. Though the Mints are the chief purchasers of silver and the smallest purchasers of gold, they are quite unable to keep up the price of silver. The Mints of the United States, of France, and of India, have laboured to keep up the price by enormous coinage, but hitherto they have failed. The sum of our knowledge of the commissions of different nations is, that though gold has largely increased since 1850 in annual product, the demand for purposes other than coinage, industry, bullion, and hoarding—has been so great as to keep up its price. Silver, on the other hand, though its product has also increased and though the demand for coinage up to 1880 often exceeded the annual product, has been in such small demand for industrial purposes that its price has fallen. One of the chief reasons for this seems to be that in a busy country of large commerce silver is too bulky and heavy for use as a coin in important transactions. Silver, as a fractional coin and of token value, is indispensable. The French and United States coins, with their legal ratio, are not full weighted. What has happened in America even with light silver dollars worth only 75 cents? In 11 years the United States has coined no less than 300,000,000 ounces of silver, and has now in the Treasury 335,500,000 dollars and fractional coin worth £69,000,000. In spite of this enormous coinage silver has fallen 20 per cent. in that period. The silver coin is stored away in vaults and cellars and is of no use to any human being. The silver thus locked up will remain a useless accumulation, at least until the country reduces itself to a mono-metallic silver standard. You might as well have the cellars filled with Holloway's Pills, or Pear's Soap, as with the silver. The silver coin in actual circulation is little more than one dollar per head of the population, though 290,000,000 dollars are represented in paper certificates. Past experience has shown that no legislative union of gold and silver will persuade merchants to fill their pockets with silver in small transactions, or to receive it in cartloads or shiploads in large dealings. The legal ratio in America is one ounce of gold to 16 ounces of silver. If you want to use it as coin you must have 16 times more strength to handle it, 16 times more transport to carry it, and 16 times more space to hold it. So that you have a misapplication of 16-17ths of human effort in using silver instead of gold for the purposes of commerce. The hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) and the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir W. Houldsworth) contend that the legal union of silver and gold will add more strength to the currency. It was quite true that if you yoke a carthorse to a racehorse the strength of both would be increased. But the speed of the racer would be sacrificed. Gold is more easily handled and transported, and does its work with more celerity. To ask civilised countries with large commerce to go back to a bulky and heavy standard like silver, or to couple gold and silver together is, in fact, like asking nations to give up railways and go back to stage-coaches as a means of locomotion. The bi-metallists seem desirous to restrict trade as Lycurgus did when he forced the Lacedæmonians to use iron as money in order that its weight might deter them from over-much trading. Each country adopts the money best fitted for its own work. Silver is not so well suited as copper for the uncivilised parts of Africa, for semi-civilised nations it is better adapted than gold for the standard. Before 1816 England, like other civilised nations, found the double standard of silver and gold well adapted for its transactions. In 1873 many nations preferred, like England, to adopt the single gold standard. What was it that converted 309,000,000 bi-metallists to become mono-metallists? It was the simple fact that the supply of silver became greater than the demand for it as a circulating medium. When these nations used both gold and silver in the ratio of value of 1 to 15½, the ratio of the annual product of the two metals was only as 1 to 7, but now it is as 1 to 19. In America it is 1 to 20 or 1 to 30. If the power of Statute Law could override the laws of supply and demand and give a legal value to two metals, it would be more simple to fix a ratio of equality and say that one ounce of silver should have the same value as one ounce of gold. The hon. Member for Flintshire admits the logic of the position. He says that Statute Law could create and uphold equal values between the two metals, but that he prefers the ratio of 1 to 15½ because of old experience. I wonder that it did not occur to my hon. Friend that Statute Law is powerless to control laws of nature. Locke, in his famous essay on currency, put this very clearly—

> "You will as fruitlessly endeavour to keep two different things at the same price one with another, as you could keep two things in equilibrium when their varying weights depend on different causes."

The hon. Member for Flint has quoted several benevolent passages from remarks made by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer in relation to a silver currency, but there is one passage he has not quoted. At the Conference of 1878 our present Chancellor of the Exchequer was the delegate of England, and in his final speech on that occasion said—

> "As for the desire that has been expressed that a fixed ratio may be established between gold and silver and an International value be given to them, I declare that in my view it is impossible to realise this, impossible to maintain it in theory, and that it is contrary to the principles of science."

The bi-metallists wholly disagree with Locke and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the physical impossibility of keeping up a fixed ratio, for they contend that what is impossible for a single nation is quite possible for a combination of nations. What does this admission amount to? It is giving up bi-metallism as a principle, and relying upon it as a Trust Syndicate. No doubt such an International Syndicate would raise the price of silver up to a certain period, and would greatly stimulate its production. What has happened in the recent copper ring would certainly happen in a new silver ring. The bi-metallists desire a Conference. What can a Conference do in regard to supply and demand? Suppose all nations agreed to dress their soldiers and reserves in red coats and blue trousers and to establish a bi-colour ratio between the red dye stuff of madder and the blue of indigo. No doubt the price of both would rise, and France, Turkey, and Holland would again open up vast areas to the production of madder, and India would open new vats for indigo. How long would the price last at a fixed rate, especially as there is an outside demand of 24 civilians for each soldier? I can understand why America should advocate a bi-metallic league; but I am inclined to agree with a quiet writer like Jevons even when he remarks—

> "Does it not seem outrageous folly for England to create a factitious demand for silver in order to keep up the profits of the Nevada Mines?"

The chief commercial nations of the world are to be called together to consider whether a bi-metallic system can be established in their common interests. England, the great creditor nation of the world, is to invite the debtor nations to confer with her as to whether the debts contracted in gold since 1816 may be repaid in depreciated silver, which the experience of centuries shows is the metal most liable to fluctuations in price, and which is certainly a worse medium of exchange and probably a worse standard of value. Of course, with a legal tender of an overrated metal silver would displace gold in our currency. No doubt the other nations will willingly, nay joyously, invite this country to walk into their parlour and receive the innocent fly. Practically the proposal is to widen the Latin Union, by including in it England, Germany, the American States, and perhaps India. Certainly there is novelty in the idea. The Latin Union was quite powerless to uphold the conventional ratio; but an enlarged Latin Union, containing England, which is *facile princeps* the great creditor nation, would, I admit, be much more stable. How long would this stability last? Just as long as England remained in the Union as a meek sheep to be shorn of her wool by the debtor nations. Modern bi-metallists are like the ancient alchemists, only that they are upside down. Our former Monarchs used to keep alchemists in their households to transmute silver into gold; but now our bi-metallic alchemists are striving to convert English gold into foreign silver—the nobler into the baser metal. I am sure it is in the interest of England to adhere to her monetary system in perfect independence of other nations. Bi-metallism is a theory which the Royal Commission could not agree to recommend. The hon. Members who move the Resolution express their satisfaction with some of the admissions of that Commission. Why do they not attach importance to the final conclusion of Lord Herschell and his co-signatories, when they say—

> "The change proposed is tremendous, and we cannot but feel that, to a great extent, it would be a leap in the dark?"

*(10.45.) **THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND** (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I wish, Mr. Speaker, that the right hon. Member for Derby, who spoke earlier in the evening, had heard the interesting speech just delivered on the same side of the question as that on which he delivered himself, for I think he would have admitted that if there are philosophers who advocate the bi-metallic heresy the philosophers are not all on one side. Now, Mr. Speaker, my heresy on this question is of rather ancient date. I believe that many Gentlemen on this side of the House have been converted to what is called, not very happily, I think, bi-metallism, by the economic evils which they think, and in my opinion justly think, have flowed from the rupture of the bi-metallic par of 1873, and it was not until the economic consequences of that great currency change had been brought home to them, in the shape of commercial and agricultural depression, that they became converts to the view that a bi-metallic currency is the best currency which the world as a whole can adopt. That, at all events, is not my case. From a time when I had more opportunity than now of studying economic theories I became a convert to that opinion, which is not the opinion of a small minority of lunatics, as some persons vainly imagine, but is one held by the great majority of experts in France, in Germany, and in America; and I hold that opinion on broad grounds which have been strengthened, but not created by any experience which we have had since 1874. I admit that to attribute all the economic evils under which this country has been suffering for the last 15 years to the divergence between the currency value of gold and silver is not only erroneous in itself, but is in contradiction of the most ordinary economic knowledge, which shows us that for every great economic change a very large number of diverse, separate, and independent forces are responsible. But because that divergence in value is not wholly or, perhaps, even chiefly responsible for the great disasters that have occurred, that is no reason why we should not remedy, as far as we can, by an improvement of our currency system, the disasters for which that system has been responsible, and why we should not adopt a currency calculated in the future to give us a stability that, unfortunately, has not existed in the civilised world during the last 15 or 16 years. Now, there are three entirely distinct and separate kinds of evils which, I think, may be shown to have followed from the existing currency system. The first evil, and, I think, in some respects the least evil,

though it is one that is especially felt in Lancashire, is that which results from the admittedly temporary circumstance that a bonus has been given to Indian exports by the process of the fall of silver. The right hon. Member for Derby told us that, though this was an admitted evil for Lancashire, it was an unmixed benefit to India. I will come to that point directly, but let me point out, with regard to Indian manufactures, that we cannot regard any temporary stimulation of its export trade as an unmixed benefit. One of the great evils of any bounty system—and this by the hypothesis is a bounty system —is that it is, or may be, temporary in its effects. It stimulates trade, but when it ceases there is nothing to support the accumulation of labour and capital in an industry predestined, from natural and permanent causes, to ruin, or comparative ruin, at no distant date; yet while the benefit conferred upon India, the country in which the bounty is given, may be temporary, the injury done to England, the country against which the bounty is directed, may produce evils of the most serious kind. Because, notice this—the evils arising from a diversion of trade from one channel to another by artificial means, are not to be measured by a simple consideration of the loss or gain to the community from having to purchase a dearer or a cheaper article. A great injury to the community arises from this fact—that when an industry moves, the instruments of production either do not move at all, or move with very unequal facility. You may easily transfer floating capital to a more profitable industry; but that part of capital which is embodied in machinery and buildings you cannot move at all, while labour moves only with the greatest difficulty, and at a great cost of inconvenience and suffering. The Lancashire labourers who suffer from this temporary bounty given to the Indian labourers cannot transfer their industry to a new market, while the Indian labourers will in their turn suffer when the artificial bounty produced by the divergence between gold and silver comes to an end. Now I go to the second effect produced by our present system, which is the uncertainty of exchange. Now, the uncertainty of exchange is a wholly different evil from those to which I have just referred. It would exist equally though silver were appreciated instead of depreciated, and would produce consequences probably not less disastrous. The right hon. Member for Derby, who cannot pursue his consideration even of a currency question without calling into play his great controversial talents, even though his friends and not his enemies are his victims, chose to use the most violent language against the Indian Administration who were his colleagues in 1886 when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he told us, in words which unfortunately I did not take down—and I cannot from my own resources successfully imitate them—that they bitterly complained of the extension of Indian manufactures and productions. Now, I assert with confidence that no Indian Government ever complained of that; what they complained of was that the whole of Indian finance was thrown into disorder by the uncertainty in the exchanges, and that the result of the disorder in Indian finance was suffering to the Indian taxpayer. I might refer here to the embarrassment caused in International transactions between gold and silver-using countries by this uncertainty; but the matter has been so well put by my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, that I will at once pass on to the third evil arising from the divergence of value between the two currencies, which is, in my opinion, the most important of all. What the world requires is a permanent and a stable currency. Money is a measure of value, and it performs not only the function of measuring the value of the transactions from day to day, but it acts as what has been called a standard of deferred payments; and unless your standard of deferred payments is in itself a stable standard you necessarily inflict a great hardship either upon the creditors or upon the debtors in a community. Some have argued as if those who are in favour of bi-metallism desire a currency inflation. I do not desire a currency inflation; though, no doubt, if we must suffer either from inflation or from contraction, then I say let us suffer from inflation. What I desire is, that we should do our best to find a currency which will be neither subject to serious inflation nor to serious contraction; and I cannot conceive how anyone who has studied this question can doubt that a currency formed of two metals would be less liable to the violent changes of value that the existing mono-metallic currencies. The right hon. Gentleman asked us to define in what consists the scarcity of gold? The scarcity of gold, or of any currency, exists wherever the standard of deferred payment seriously alters its value in an upward direction. It can be shown, as I believe, that where a bi-metallic currency exists such scarcity is less likely to occur. To those who think it unlikely to occur under our present system I should like to ask whether they think the tendencies of commerce are in the direction of depreciation or appreciation? I admit, so far as you invent new banking facilities and new methods of economising the precious metals in their work as coins, so far you mitigate the inconvenience which must ensue from the increase of population, the increase of production, the increase of commerce, and the increased amount of work which you throw upon your currency. But do you expect that, in the long run, these banking facilities will keep pace with the increased amount of labour which you are deliberately throwing upon the gold standard? We have heard a great deal to-night, and have seen a great deal in the Press, to the effect that the fall in prices is owing, not to the scarcity of gold, but to the increase of commodities. I am not sure that the distinction is not entirely fallacious. So long as the work a given amount of money has to do *increases* (it matters not from what cause), so long will you suffer from the evils of an appreciating currency. Do not mono-metallists regard with apprehension the effect of reversing the legislation of silver-using countries? If America to-morrow were to decide that it would have no more to do with silver, but would work its whole commercial system on a gold basis, where would prices be? Do you seriously think that a gross injustice would not be done to the debtor, that grave injury would not be inflicted upon commerce, and a serious difficulty be thrown upon the Government of India? In the absence of international agreement you are not only perfectly helpless to prevent changes of that kind, but you would not have the slightest ground of complaint against the Government which caused all the inconvenience. The conclusion that I draw from this very brief analysis of the evils and advantages, relatively of the bi-metallic and the mono-metallic systems is that if you can establish a bi-metallic system you should do so. For the House will, I think, grant this: that if you had a bi-metallic system you would get rid, in the first place, of the artificial bounty which everybody admits to be an evil in International transactions. In the second place, you would get rid of the uncertainty of exchange, which is admitted even by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby to be a great impediment to manufacture and trade; and though I do not say you would get rid altogether of the oscillations and variations in your standard of payment, you would greatly diminish them, while you would entirely remove the evils which have arisen in the past, and must arise in the future, I fear, from the independent action of countries with regard to the currency they choose to employ. We have only, therefore, to consider whether a bi-metallic ratio is possible or not. The first observation I have to make on that point is that the problem has been solved by experience. The thing has been done. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman himself will attempt to deny that it has been done, and that the relatively small commercial community of France, Belgium, and Italy were able by their united action, to give us all the benefits of a stable exchange which we were too dull or too lazy to obtain for ourselves The right hon. Member for Derby, who, I observe, has just come in, asked why, if it was so advantageous, did the Latin Union give it up? Well, the Latin Union gave it up for reasons perfectly consistent with the bi-metallic theory. Nobody denies that there is a point after which a bi-metallic country will be denuded of the more expensive metal. The smaller the bi-metallic area the more easily that point is reached. The action of Germany in 1873 did undoubtedly throw, in the opinion of French statesmen—I do not say whether they were right or wrong—a burden on the bi-metallic machinery of the Latin Union more than it could bear That has never been denied by any bi-metallist. On the contrary, it is what some bi-metallists prophesied would occur under such circumstances. But is that any solid argument against introducing a state of things in which there will be no country like Germany outside the Union, and in which the bi-metallic area, instead of being confined to France, Belgium, and Italy, would embrace practically the whole commercial community of the world? Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby drew a hypothetical picture of what the world would be like if the bi-metallic dream, as he would call it, were to become a reality, and if some great political catastrophe like the Franco-German War were to occur, and an important country like Germany were to withdraw from the Union. The picture does not alarm me. What motive would Germany—taking that country for the purpose of illustration—have for withdrawing? The right hon. Gentleman says, "In order to get gold." He says that gold would naturally flow to the country where most could be got for it; that if gold was unduly depreciated in the Union, the country that left the Union might get it; and on that basis he founds the theory that Germany, desiring to get gold quickly, would be tempted to leave the Union. But that would only happen if the ratio between the two metals were disturbed. If you have a sufficiently large area, if, as the minority on the Commission proposed, you embrace practically the civilised world in your bi-metallic area, the action of one country in leaving the Union could not disturb the ratio. And since it is only through a disturbance of the ratio that it would attract gold, it could not have any motive for leaving the Bi-metallic Union. Let me also point out, in the second place, that a country which is just going to war does not take that opportunity of entering into a currency operation which certainly would not have a quieting effect upon its Money Market; and, in the third place, let me point out that the effect of the adoption of the system must necessarily be a slow effect. It would not be like raising the bank rate, which brings in gold at once into the Bank of England. Gold would only come in by a slow percolation of appreciated metal from the bi-metallic countries. The third objection, and possibly the most important, depends upon the theory that legislation cannot fix the ratio between any two metals for currency purposes. Now, I do not think that a question like this can be argued fitly in an Assembly of this kind; but let me point out two or three facts which bear on it. My right hon. Friend the leader of the House read some very interesting extracts from the Debates which occurred in this House in 1830, from which it appears that the universal opinion of competent authorities—among them Sir Robert Peel and Lord Althorp—then was that to endeavour to fix a ratio between the two metals was to run counter to the inevitable laws of nature. But since that date a complete revolution has taken place in the way in which, in this country at least, economists look at this question. I do not believe that you will find a theoretical teacher or professor of position under 50 years of age in America, Germany, France, Italy, or England who is prepared to stake his reputation on the theory that you cannot fix a bi-metallic ratio. As many who have devoted themselves to the theoretical consideration of this question know, the view of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby is antiquated. I state that with some confidence, for I observe always that the right hon. Gentleman is a Tory in the wrong place. Consider the Report of the Commission. It will not be asserted that that Commission was composed of persons of very radical tendencies on currency questions. In fact, a large number of them were deeply imbued with and attached to the doctrines prevalent in England 30 years ago; yet every one of those gentlemen, differing as they did upon many points, was on this most important issue convinced by the force of logic and argument of the fact that there is no inherent difficulty in establishing a fixed ratio between the two metals.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: Two Members of the Commission expressed a diametrically opposite view.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course, I accept any statement made by the right hon. Gentleman. I am quite aware that two Members, the right hon. Gentleman being one of them, signed a minority Report; but I do not understand that they deliberately traversed the statement that a ratio could be established between the two metals. If it be possible, as I believe almost every economist of repute holds it to be possible, to fix, by international arrangement this ratio between the two metals, is it not preposterous that a question of such supreme international importance should be left wholly to the separate action of different nations? Postal questions and labour questions we can settle internationally, but currency questions, it appears, we cannot so settle. Though we were told by the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last that commerce was an international affair, the currency which is so intimately connected with commerce appears not to be an international affair. It seems to me to be of all international affairs the most international, the one that most deserves to be treated by common arrangement among nations. I, of course, admit that there may be difficulties in establishing this system; but I think those difficulties have been exaggerated. When I reflect that great nations have gone from inconvertible currency to convertible currency, from depreciated to undepreciated currency, from silver, to gold, and from gold to silver without those colossal disturbances and those serious diversions of trade which the right hon. Gentleman anticipates, I cannot help thinking that possibly those who, like my right hon. Friends the leader of the House and the Member for Derby, anticipate commercial disaster, not from the system, but from the process of its establishment, exaggerate the danger they fear. I frankly admit that I have not sufficient acquaintance with financial details to give to the House an opinion on the subject which is worth very much; but I have noticed in looking over the commercial history of the world that in almost every question the practical men ultimately come round to the side of the theoretical men. I am prepared, like the right hon. Gentleman, to appeal to the early experience of the century. He is as well aware as I am that the Directors of the Bank of England of that day and the commercial classes whom they represented were vehemently opposed to the resumption of specie payments, and anticipated the most serious commercial consequences from the reversion to the gold standard in England. Those anticipations were combated by theoretical men like Ricardo and others, and they proved to be unfounded. I am far from saying or thinking that the opinions of the great practical financiers and bankers of this country are to be despised—far from it. I know that nothing can be done, and I would suggest that nothing should be attempted which is against their views and wishes. I think it is from a discussion such as this that those who are engaged in the practical financial operations of London and other centres may see what dangers they run or may run from allowing every nation independently to settle, not for itself, but for the world, the currency that is to be adopted—from allowing Germany to decide whether the Indian Government shall or shall not have a tax on Indian rice; from allowing America to decide whether or not debts shall be paid at a rate which is equivalent to putting 25 per cent. additional burden on the debtor—and they will come round to the view that in the face of the rapidly-growing commerce of the world, in the face of the increasingly international character of the commercial transactions, it is desirable that some international arrangement should be arrived at which would not only have the effect of entirely preventing these daily oscillations between silver-using countries and gold-using countries which now perplex merchants and manufacturers, but will also have the effect of giving a more stable index of the measure of the permanent indebtedness of the world than they can ever hope to have under the mono-metallic standard. I trust the House will understand that. I adhere now as always to the view that the bimetallic standard is the best; at the same time, I feel bound to give additional emphasis to what I have already stated, that it would be folly and madness in any Government to go in advance of the educated commercial opinion of the country. I certainly should think it not far from lunacy to attempt to force on the United Kingdom and the City of London a form of currency they did not thoroughly adopt and believe in.

*(11.26.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): One of the last words which fell from my right hon. Friend was the word "lunacy." I have been told that there are three great forces which produce lunacy—love,

religion, and currency. From his extremely luminous and sane speech it is clear that at least the last of these three forces has not in the slightest degree affected him. I think that mono-metallists have made a great error in not grappling more seriously and at an earlier period with the problems which bi-metallists have put forward. There are too many mono-metallists who simply treat the whole bi-metallist theory as if it was not worth consideration. That is a practice to which I always demur, for I hold that many of the arguments adduced are strong arguments and require to be seriously dealt with. But the great point is this. Supposing we were to adopt the bi-metallic system, and were to remedy, as I believe we should to a considerable extent, the grievances which are alleged, and I believe with great truth, to exist under the present system, should we not at the same time be opening up serious grievances, great risks in another direction, the ill effects of which we might possibly not be able to see at the present moment? I accept two out of the three points put forward by my right hon. Friend and other speakers on behalf of bi-metallism. I believe that the uncertainty which is produced in our transactions with India by the present state of things is unsatisfactory, and if we could meet it, it would be an enormous advantage. Still, it is perhaps possible to exaggerate the inconvenience which arises from this uncertainty, because after all there are a great number of countries with whom we trade where the same uncertainty exists, and it exists much more in the case of countries with a depreciated currency than in the case of those using silver, and if we were to exclude from the purview of profitable operations all those countries that have a currency less stable than our own, I am afraid the area over which profits are realised by this country would sustain serious diminution. Our merchants are accustomed to deal with fluctuating currencies; and in answer to my hon. Friend behind me I may say that the very telegraph to which he alluded, in his able speech in seconding the Motion, as having diminished the profits of merchants has been one of the chief instruments by which it has been possible to meet the uncertainties of currencies. If I am not mistaken, it is the general practice of merchants at the present time to attempt to meet the uncertainties of exchange by ascertaining by telegraph the exact rate of exchange, and then to cover themselves by securing that rate. I admit broadly that if we should have a similar currency with India, if it were possible to get rid of these uncertainties, we should take a great step in facilitating our relations with that great portion of the Empire. It is to be deplored that such great fluctuations should have taken place. A second object in which I agree with my right hon. Friend is in the desire, if it were possible, to have one currency throughout the world, that all our transactions might be conducted on a more stable footing as regards the metal in which debts are paid. I do not agree with the third point my right hon. Friend made, as regards the grievance he raised with respect to the system of bounties—temporary bounties he called them—which are now offered to the cotton goods manufacturers of India. How can my right hon. Friend be sure that these are temporary bounties? It would have been a temporary bounty in the event of our returning again to the old standard. For a certain number of years we have been considerably below that which used to be considered as the proper standard between the two metals. I doubt whether, unless the countries of Europe and America take some great international action, how far it can be said these bounties are temporary. I do not know how we can regulate them. The House would take a great responsibility on itself if it attempted to decide whether this is a temporary difficulty or a permanent difficulty—and whether, if we consider it a temporary difficulty, we should take steps to throw backward the industrial movement that has taken place in India. We must look at it from the point of view of what is right and what is wrong. We have a serious responsibility in the matter. Supposing we endeavoured to meet all the difficulties that exist at the present moment, we have to consider whether in doing justice to some, we may not find ourselves doing an immense injustice to others. Look at the position of India in this matter. There was a time when India suffered enormously from the fall in the price of silver. Some 10 years ago, and even later, the sufferings that India experienced were extreme, and I differ entirely from the right hon. Member for Derby, who attempted to minimise these difficulties, and said that the question was as to the salaries of a few Indian officials. India owed £15,000,000 to this country, and it had to remit that £15,000,000 here in gold, and the loss on exchange which India had to bear amounted to £3,000,000, an amount which paralysed for a long time the whole finances of India. But I am not sure whether I exaggerate in suggesting that India has now settled down, more or less, to the new conditions. New trades have been developed in consequence of this state of things, and the price of silver being low has had a great effect upon India generally. Supposing, if it were possible, we were to re-cast the present system and raise the rate of exchange, should we be right or wrong in taking that serious step? If I had time I should wish to say one word upon that point before I sit down. But with regard to the position of India generally, surely we have to consider this: whether now that these interests have grown up, and now that the very attitude of those who used to speak in the name of India has changed, and they take a different course to that which they recommended before, whether we ought to attempt to restore the old state of things artificially. Thus I doubt whether my right hon. Friend is right in urging this temporary bounty as one of the reasons why we should proceed to the adoption of bi-metallism. I agree that theoretically it is possible to return to bi-metallism; but, while it is theoretically possible, there are many practical difficulties in the way. I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who said that he could not understand how it could be even theoretically possible. It has been stated by the Royal Commission that the existence of bi-metallism in France did form for a long period of years a powerful means of retaining the ratio between the two metals. By legislation, the ratio was fixed; and the question has been asked, Why did the Latin Union take the course they did? For this obvious reason: While other Mints were open for silver, only a portion flowed into the Latin Union. But the Latin Union saw that it might have to bear the whole brunt of the silver that came from Germany when Germany had adopted a gold currency; and also the product of the new silver mines worked in America, and it was natural that it closed its Mints. We were in the same position in India. While Mints remained open they constitute a powerful force in sustaining the relative value between the two metals. The fact that Germany poured its silver into the Latin Union caused the difficulty in those countries, because the area was so limited. I want the mono-metallist to understand that argument, for if we could get an area wide enough the bi-metallic principle is theoretically possible, provided that you can be certain that all parties will maintain the agreement. But then you come to one of the practical difficulties to which I have alluded, and you must look at the practical difficulties as well as the theoretical possibilities on the other side. I have contended, and I am prepared still to contend, that I should prefer the currency of the world to depend rather upon two metals than upon one metal. To those views I gave expression in 1878. I am not now speaking individually of the United Kingdom; but I should like to see silver pressed into service to do the work of the currency of the world as well as gold, so that the currency of the world should not depend on one metal, but on two. While I rejected the idea of a Bi-metallic Union in 1878, I said this—that the mono-metallists were in the wrong who wished to make a crusade for the adoption of a general gold currency. I should be only too glad if other countries would have a silver currency, for it would steady both the exchanges of this country and of India. Therefore, I do not wish to say one word to discourage other countries from adopting the bi-metallic system. I have always looked upon silver and gold not as antagonistic to each other, not as being articles, the price of one of which would necessarily fall when the other rose, but I have looked upon them rather as partners who together were doing the work of the currency of the world. Allusion has been made to the rate of discount in connection with the scarcity of gold; but such allusion confuses capital and currency. The alleged scarcity of gold has to me another meaning. I think that the amount of gold used as currency is extremely small to bear the enormous burden which is put upon it. I admit that, as interested in the commerce and monetary system of this country, I feel a kind of shame that, on the occasion of £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 of gold being taken from this country to Brazil or any other country, it should immediately have the effect of causing a momentary alarm throughout the country. I doubt seriously whether the stock of gold which we have in this country in an available form is one whit too large; on the contrary, I think it is rather too small. Therefore, I think that as long as other countries use silver they are doing a general service to the commerce of the world. If a gold standard had once for all been adopted, and prices had adopted themselves to such a great change, the existing gold might be sufficient for all purposes; but a transition involving a first demand for gold creates great difficulties for those countries whose currency is gold, because the narrow margin which is now allowed in all currency transactions involves such inconvenience when any sudden demand is made upon what is a comparatively small stock. Therefore, I do not admit the argument which rejects allusion to the scarcity of gold, and I say that I should be glad to see silver performing as much work as is possible in the currency. But we have to see what is practicable. What are we asked to do by the Motion now before the House? We are asked to convoke another Conference to see whether some international agreement cannot be arrived at. Well, Conferences have been held and very exhaustive Reports made, and no result has been possible. We have appointed a Royal Commission, and what is the result? A divided Report; and certainly it is not upon any divided Report that we have a right to take the immensely responsible step of tampering with the general currency. The argument has been used that we might by a general arrangement adopt a bi-metallic system. I have no time now to state what I consider would be the danger of such a course; but though you might have a Conference that would come to an agreement, the interests would be so diverse that I have very grave doubts whether that agreement would be permanently kept. I ask what security we should have that that agreement would be permanently kept, and not only that, but would it not be necessary also that all countries should believe that it would be permanently kept? If you knew that there would be no desire ever to draw back, then silver and gold might circulate together on the ratio fixed, subject to one important condition, that the outside uses of gold and silver should be, comparatively speaking, analogous, and that there should be no great desire to use gold rather than silver for any other purposes. But there will always be anxiety to keep gold for emergencies, and it is this which makes me doubt whether a general international agreement would be permanently safe. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland did not attach great importance to that objection; but I confess that to me it is a very important one. In case of war every one strains for gold, and hon. Members may not be aware that gold is kept in reserve by foreign countries for the purposes of a war chest. When war was declared, or before war was declared, one country might take measures to attract gold to itself and that might alarm other countries, and there might be a scramble for gold under which the agreement would break down and general confusion arise. Again, you would have to pass through a long period before you arrived at your agreement, and what fearful speculation would not arise in the interval? I admit that that would only be a temporary difficulty; but I think that the Government would only be justified in going to a Conference if it knew that the country was behind it and that it was practically almost certain of success. I think it would be wrong to call a Conference in the belief that we might carry out something which we could not effect without the assent and co-operation of foreign countries, and which we might not even be able to persuade the public of this country to adopt. Therefore, I hold that it is entirely premature to carry such a plan into execution; and I think that hon. Members will do well, acting upon their own responsibility—

for this is an open question—to vote that the words proposed to be left out shall stand part of the Question.

*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK: Sir, I do not wish to stand between the House and a Division, and in the few minutes which remain before the necessary close of the Debate under the new Rule it is impossible to reply fully to the two right hon. Gentlemen who have just sat down; but I have been referred to several times in the course of the debate, and there are some points on which I should be glad to say a few words. The case of India has been referred to by several speakers, and, of course, it must be admitted that the Revenue of India, being payable in silver, has fallen in consequence of the depression in silver; but if the Government have received less it is because the taxpayer has paid less. The commerce of India has not suffered. On the contrary, the exports and imports have risen from £93,000,000 in 1873 to £180,000,000 in 1888. Indeed, part of the case of the supporters of bi-metallism consists in a complaint that the trade of India has so greatly increased. I cannot help thinking that the difficulties of exchange have been greatly exaggerated; at any rate, it is a remarkable fact that, while the export trade of India since 1873 has risen more with gold-using than with silver-using countries, namely, 27 per cent. only with silver-using and 62 per cent. with gold-using countries. The right hon. Gentleman said that no one would deny that the fall in silver of 20 per cent. operated as a bounty to that extent in favour of the Indian manufacturer. But that is by no means admitted. Hon. Members near me will, I am sure, demur to any such statement. Suppose an Indian and an English manufacturer send to a neutral market goods of a character which were formerly worth 1,000 rupees, or £50. It is said that a fall of 20 per cent. in prices, including that of silver, gives the Indian manufacturer a bounty of 20 per cent. This is an entire fallacy. No doubt the Indian producer would still receive 1,000 rupees, which would buy as much as before, while the English producer would only receive £37 10s., instead of £50; but then by the hypothesis his £37 10s. would buy as much as £50 did formerly, and as much as 1,000 rupees do now. I do not believe that the fall in prices is due to the fall in silver, or that it implies any substantial appreciation of gold. It is due mainly to improvements in production and greater cheapness in transport. Take the case of American wheat. In 20 years there has been a fall of no less than 20s. a quarter. But then the railway charges from the interior are 11s. a quarter less, freight 4s., loading, unloading, &c., 3s. less, and boys 1s. This accounts for 19s. out of the 20s. No doubt agriculturists and manufacturers suffer from the fall, and I sympathise with them. But when the hon. Member for Flintshire says that the working bees suffer and the drones gain, I ask who gains by the cheapness of bread? Who consumes the wheat? Surely the working bees. The working classes now have good employment, and wages are rising. They are the gainers, and I think the House will long hesitate before they alter the standard of value with the express object of raising the prices of the comforts and necessaries of life. My hon. Friends think they can fix a ratio between silver and gold. I entirely disbelieve in the power of any international arrangement to fix a ratio of value between any two articles of commerce. It has been said by several speakers that this was admitted by all the Commissioners. But that is not so. Mr. Birch and I entirely dissented, and our four colleagues admitted that this might be an agio either on the gold or silver coin. It must be remembered that gold and silver are not merely used for coinage. It is estimated that from £12,000,000 to £16,000,000 are used in the arts. Do my hon. Friends think they can fix the price of what is used in the arts? If not, neither can they do so for that part which is used for coinage. The cheaper metal will inevitably, as it always has, drive out the dearer. Under the bi-metallic arrangement of the Latin Union there was for years a considerable agio on the gold coins, and the arrangement broke down in 1873 because it was found impossible to maintain it any longer. It is a great convenience to have a sufficient amount of coinage of all three metals—gold, silver, and copper. The present system secures this, but under this proposal it would be impossible. No one can foretell what the production of the mines will be, but, as sure as fate, either the gold will expel the silver, or, what now seems most probable, the silver will drive out the gold. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland and his Friends spoke of themselves as bi-metallists. The term was, however, misleading. True bi-metallism would be if the creditor could claim to receive, and the debtor to pay, the debt half in silver and half in gold. But what my hon. Friends propose is that one of the parties to the contract should be allowed to pay either in silver or in gold, at his option. It is estimated that we receive not less than £85,000,000 from our investments over sea; and what a remarkable fact it is that our investments over sea exceed by £20,000,000 the whole rent of the land of our own country, which only amounts to £65,000,000. Now, no doubt, part of the £85,000,000 is derived from shares and freight. But there still remains a very large sum, perhaps £40,000,000 to £50,000,000, payable by agreement, either in gold or silver. My hon. Friends, in their great generosity, propose that we should give to foreign countries the option of paying in which ever metal might become the cheaper of the two. If silver falls we are to be paid in silver; if gold falls, in gold. Moreover, the same uncertainty will apply to our internal trade. In fact, the arrangement will tend to drive all financial transactions to some country which is not so unwise as to adopt such a fluctuating currency. No reference has been made to our colonies. It is not likely that Australia, which produces no silver and much gold, will abandon its gold standard; and unless it does so the difficulties of exchange, whatever they are, will only be transferred from India to Australia. The mercantile community are quite opposed to these proposals. At the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce last year a resolution in favour of bi-metallism only found 11 supporters among 174 delegates. The hon. Member for Flintshire says that the prosperity of England ceased in 1873. I do not deny that some trades have been depressed, and that rents have fallen heavily. I sympathise greatly with those who have suffered. But, taking the country as a whole, so far from falling back, there has been an immense advance since 1873. Our exports have risen from £670,000,000 to £740,000,000, and adding on 20 per cent., which hon. Members say is the average fall in prices, the amount would be brought up to £890,000,000, showing the enormous increase of £220,000,000. The annual income of the country has risen from £514,000,000 to £636,000,000, showing an increase of income of no less than £122,000,000. The Clearing House transactions have risen from £6,000,000,000 to £7,600,000,000, showing an increase of no less than £1,600,000,000. Lastly, Mr. Giffen has shown that in the past 10 years the realised value of the property of the country has risen from £8,500,000,000 to £10,000,000,000, showing the enormous increase of £1,500,000,000. And yet my hon. Friends complain. Surely, such an increase ought to satisfy the wildest dreams of avarice. I cannot, therefore, think that my hon. Friends have shown any reason for a change, or have proved the practicability of the plan they propose, and I hope the House will not agree to the Amendment.

(11.55.) The House divided:—Ayes 183; Noes 87.—(Div. List, No. 52.)

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Committee upon Monday next.

Monday, April 21, 1890.

MURDER OF A NATIVE OF INDIA.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has obtained or can obtain, any Report regarding the military aspects of the case in which a soldier named O'Hara and another were tried for the murder of a native, and the state of discipline disclosed at the trial in a cantonment in the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta, where a party of soldiers, after drinking in the canteen, broke out of barracks with their rifles and ammunition, and after various outrages in search of drink, mortally wounded a native who failed to supply them; and then, after spending some hours of a fine moonlight night plundering liquor, firing rifles in a wanton way, and conducting themselves in a drunken and outrageous manner, impressed a cart, and in that conveyance openly came home by the high road and re-entered barracks; whether he has observed that neither at the time did the Military Authorities interfere, nor for weeks after was anything done to identify the soldiers, and when, later, in response to an offer by the magistrate of pardon and reward one of the soldiers testified against the others, his evidence was so uncorroborated that eventually the High Court acquitted and discharged the accused, and justice has altogether failed; and whether, in communicating with the Military Authorities, the Secretary of State will inquire into the whole matter as a question of military discipline?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No Report has been received by the Secretary of State, but he will call for one from the Government of India.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, April 22, 1890.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.

Brought from the Commons; Read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 59.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, April, 22, 1890.

SILVER MARKING.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to Parliamentary Paper No. 59, "Foreign Countries (Gold and Silver Marking)"; whether, considering that every article of silver plate manufactured in the United Kingdom for home sale or for exportation must be of British standard ·925, and must be hall marked; that the standards of all continental countries differ from ours, and for the most part from each other, and that most of them have marking systems of their own based upon their own standards, those standards are for the most part inferior to that of the United Kingdom; and that, in the case of foreign countries, although there are strict laws with reference to their home trade, manufacturers are permitted to make plate of any quality for exportation, British manufacturers can have similar commercial facilities extended to them?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Theoretically I have no objection whatever to British manufacturers marking plate of any quality for exportation. I understand, however, that the great majority of the tradesmen are in favour of compulsory hall marking, and I do not know how the two can be combined. It is a matter for discussion, and it shall receive due consideration.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware, in reference to the Indian trade, that the manufacture is from rupee silver ·916, and that this is slightly reduced in working?

MR. GOSCHEN: I did not understand that the question referred to the Indian trade. I understood that the hon. Gentleman's question referred to the exportation of manufactured plate, and not to the importation of Indian silver manufactured articles. We do intend to arrange that Indian silver manufactured articles shall be imported with a special mark at the rupee standard, or with a special mark corresponding to it. That is the concession which we hope to make and in regard to which we are in communication with the Secretary of State for India.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): Will the Goldsmiths' Company not interfere with the arrival of Indian silver plate?

MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member must understand that I have given a full answer in regard to our intentions.

THE TEA DUTY.

MR. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in view of the losses which the retail dealers in tea would suffer if the reduction in the duty from 6d. to 4d. were to take effect from the 1st proximo, he will consider whether the date at which the reduced duty only will be levied can be postponed until 1st June, and thus allow the retail dealers an opportunity, such as was given to them when the duty was previously reduced, of getting rid of their existing stocks.

*MR. GOSCHEN: This is a matter of very considerable importance, and I have been engaged in endeavouring to ascertain what, on the whole, would be the most convenient course in the circumstances. While, on the one hand, I have received a number of communications urging that the reduction should be postponed in order to enable the dealers to decrease their stocks, I am informed on the other hand that postponement would cause considerable confusion in the trade. I shall make inquiry, in order to find what will be the most convenient course. With regard to precedents, it is true that on the last occasion additional time was given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian. But there were special circumstances then, and on former occasions the reduction came into operation at once. But I will make inquiry and answer the question on Thursday.

PLATE DUTIES.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the whole of the trade engaged in the manufacture of gold plate has been at a standstill since he made his Budget Statement; and whether he will consider the claim of the manufacturers to a rebate on the stocks in hand?

MR. GOSCHEN: I have received representations that the trade in gold plate has been thrown into some confusion by the proposed abolition of the duties on plate. Some inconvenience is, however, inevitable when an abolition or reduction of duty takes place as regards the articles affected. My attention has been exclusively drawn in respect of the difficulties in which manufacturers or others are placed as regards their duty paid stocks to the case of wedding rings. As wedding rings have been for years specially exempted from a drawback on exportation, no question of rebate can arise in their case. But it may be worth considering whether an extension of the date for the duty on gold plate to come into operation would not convenience holders of duty-paid stocks.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

TEA.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in lieu of the Duty of Customs now chargeable upon Tea, there shall be charged and paid, on and after the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, the Duty following, and such Duty shall continue to be charged and paid upon Tea imported into Great Britain and Ireland until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one (that is to say):

Tea . . . the pound . Four Pence."

*(2.49.) MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh S.): A conversation occurred a few minutes ago in reference to the desirability of placing these Resolutions upon the Paper. The Secretary to the Treasury very handsomely took upon himself the responsibility of not having put them down to-day, but I trust that he will go further, and promise that the omission will be repaired in future.

MR. JACKSON: I think that the general feeling of the House is in favour of that course, and I will see that, as far as I am concerned, it is adopted in future.

(2.50.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): While I am sure that we all of us rejoice that the Tea Duty is to be reduced, I trust that, at the same time, I may be permitted to express my regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has frittered away an opportunity of conferring a very great blessing upon the people of this country. We are often told that half a loaf is better than no bread, but the proverb scarcely applies to a third of a loaf. The taking away of a third of the duty will, of course, confer benefit upon some people, but not exactly upon the people whom the right hon. Gentleman himself desires to benefit. The Committee will remember the fervid eloquence with which the right hon. Gentleman urged and insisted upon the buyers of tea standing out for their rights. He was evidently afraid that they would not get the benefit of the reduction of 2d. Indeed, the language which the right hon. Gentleman used on the subject, if it had been used in Ireland upon a matter of popular interest, would most probably have subjected him to the attention of the police. He said that all buyers of tea should consider whether, by better organisation—which I take to mean combination—or by other means—which I take to mean the boycotting of refractory shopkeepers—they cannot secure to themselves the benefit of this reduction. I know that, at the present time, there is a very keen competition in the wholesale tea business, and, doubtless, enterprising merchants and middlemen will see it to their interest to give to those who buy from them the full benefit of the reduction of the duty. But how far this applies to the shopkeeper, and those especially who sell to the poor, is altogether another question. In suggesting this doubt, I do not wish to insinuate anything against the shopkeepers I am quite sure that they desire that the poor should have the benefit of the reduction of duty; but I question their capability of conferring it upon them. With regard to those who buy tea by the pound, or in larger quantities, it is easy to imagine how they will get the full benefit of the reduction of duty; but in regard to those who buy tea by the ounce, and they comprise hundreds of thousands of the population—probably millions—it is difficult to see how they can get any benefit from it at all. A reduction of 2d. per lb. amounts to half a farthing per ounce. I do not recollect having seen a half-farthing lately, and I do not think half-farthings are actually coined. Therefore, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to take off half a farthing per ounce, and consequently in regard to the enormous majority of the consumers of tea the reduction of 2d. will practically confer on them no benefit whatever. But there is another matter. This half-hearted measure for the reduction of the Tea Duties does not at all affect the evil principle of a tax which is essentially and necessarily an unjust tax, by reason of the disproportionate and unequal way in which it bears upon the rich and the poor. It still bears an enormous and an extraordinary disproportion to the value of the commodity. It amounts to at least 50 per cent. upon the average cost price of the tea before the duty is paid. I see from the Returns of one of the largest tea brokers, that of late the average price has been 8d. per lb., although some teas have fetched 9d. A duty of 4d. per lb. is 50 per cent. upon the price of the article—an enormous duty upon an article of necessary consumption. The right hon. Gentleman himself treated it as an article of necessary consumption, because, in urging upon the consumers the desirability of combining in order to obtain the benefit of the duty, he styled it an article of primary necessity. Yet, upon an article of necessity to the very poor, he is content to go on imposing a duty of 50 per cent. Further than that, it is an imposition which falls unequally upon the rich and the poor. The poor buy the cheapest tea they can get—fourpenny tea—and upon that the duty is exactly 100 per cent. What the right hon. Gentleman has endeavoured to make for the dwellers in houses between £20 and £60 a year rent is essentially a middle-class concession—a concession to men of moderate wealth, with incomes ranging from £300 to £500 and £1,000 a year. From sundry passages in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman I had hoped that something very much better might be expected from him. It will be recollected with what earnestness and manifest depth of feeling he dwelt upon the disgraceful fact that at every fresh wave of prosperity the population of this country rush to the beer barrel, the spirit tap, or the wine bottle, in order to attest that prosperity, while he knew that, at the same time, he had to acknowledge a diminution of the amount brought in by the Tea Duty. Some of us formed an inference, from the right hon. Gentleman's remarks, that he was about to propose a great shifting of the financial burdens, from those articles which are a necessity to a sober and decent life, to articles of luxury, such as intoxicating drinks. And he could have done so. He could have made an immense revolutionary change in the incidence of the burdens of the people, for he had a surplus of £3,459,000, to which he has rightly added an additional duty of 6d. upon spirits, which he expects to yield £500,000, and if he retains, for Imperial purposes, the extra duty upon beer of £350,000, he would have a surplus of nearly

£4,500,000, which would have been sufficient to give us a free breakfast table. That would have been a bold stroke of finance, and would have been extremely popular to all sections of the people, while the right hon. Gentleman would have conferred a special benefit upon the most needy and the greatest number. Instead of that, the right hon. Gentleman has frittered away his surplus by dividing it among burdens the relief of which will be very little felt indeed. Take the House Duty; a man living in a £60 house will have to pay less by 15s. a year. What gratitude can the right hon. Gentleman expect for relief on that account? People do not scrutinise so very minutely the rate bills which come in from time to time. The cause of annoyance is that any rate bills come in at all, but a difference of 15s. between one year and another will not excite a fervid burst of gratitude in the breast of a man who is living in a £60 house, whereas, if every man's tea had been put into his house free of any duty whatever, all would feel the benefit. In his Budget Speech last year, the right hon. Gentleman used these remarkable words: "I admit that the Tea Duty is a Poll Tax on a very low scale." We all admit that of all taxes a Poll Tax is the most unjust. It takes no notice of a man's means, but presses with iron uniformity upon all alike. This tax presses more heavily upon the tea of the very poor than it does upon the tea drunk by the rich, and therefore, it is even worse than a Poll Tax. I do not believe that any one who takes a sound view of what is good for the prosperity of the country can ever support the plundering of the poor by a heavy tax, like this, upon what the right hon. Gentleman himself treats as an article of primary necessity to life. Then, again, let me consider another aspect of the matter. The right hon. Gentleman just now, in answering a question put to him from this side of the House, referred to the amount of confusion wrought in business transactions by the uncertainty of the amount of duty paid.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Temporary uncertainty.

MR. PICTON: But the right hon. Gentleman in his speech also told us that one reason of the diminution of Revenue from this source was that for some time past people have been speculating on the reduction or abolition of the duty, and, therefore, that there has been much less doing in the tea market. Will not the same thing occur again this year? In no case can we suppose that a duty of 4d. can hold on very long, and this is one of the evils of Customs Duties imposed on articles of this kind. They always have an unsettling effect upon the market at particular seasons of the year, and when once it is felt, as it is now, that the duty is doomed, the uncertainty will increase and be felt painfully every year when we approach Budget day. I think the right hon. Gentleman would have been doing a better thing for the trade if, once for all, he had settled the question by sweeping the duty away altogether. He has not done quite justice to the great Empire of India in the manner in which he has dealt with this question. I, for one, would be the very last to suggest that a protective difference should be made in charging the tea which comes from India less than the tea which comes from China. I object to all such differential duties, on principle, but, looking at the very rapid and conspicuous growth of the tea trade from India, surely the right hon. Gentleman ought to recognise that it is most important to encourage, as far as possible, this source of prosperity to our great Dependency. I do not think that it is treating India as an integral part of the Empire to charge duties on goods—especially goods of this character—that are sent to us from its shores. I hope that this point will be fully considered in regard to future Budgets. One word more in regard to the time for making this change. We all credit the right hon. Gentleman with a sincere anxiety to cause as little trouble as possible to the markets. I have been strongly urged by my constituents interested in the question to secure from him, if it is at all possible, some little delay in making the change. I trust that he will carefully weigh all the addresses which will be made to him from different parts of the country, and that he will do his best to satisfy the wishes of those who have a substantial interest in the matter. I hope that what he will hear as to the trouble occasioned by these constant changes will convince him, in future, that it is his first duty to make use of what surplus may be assured to him to sweep away, once and for ever, a burden upon an article of primary necessity.

*(3.10.) MR. GOSCHEN: It would scarcely be thought that the duty which has been denounced by the hon. Member who has just sat down is one which has existed for 25 years at the amount of 6d., and that no serious attempt has been made during those years to diminish the duty. I have the good fortune to be the first Chancellor of the Exchequer who has been able to deal with this question by reducing the duty by 33 per cent., and I ought not, therefore, to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer who should be singled out by the hon. Member for maintaining part of the duty, while no attempt at the reduction or abolition of the duty has been made during the reign of previous Chancellors of the Exchequer. The hon. Member wishes to persuade me that the duty ought to be swept away altogether, and charges me with having called it a Poll Tax, for the retention of which there is no justification. When I called it a Poll Tax, I meant that it was a Poll Tax in the sense that it was borne by nearly every member of the community. This small tax is the only one of the Imperial taxes which rests upon the greater portion of the community, and if it were repealed a great number of persons would contribute not one single shilling to the Revenue. It has always been held that representation and taxation ought to go together. But, if so, the reverse is true also, namely, that taxation and representation should be combined, and that every person who exercises the franchise should contribute in some degree to the Revenue. I do not know whether hon. Members think that portion of the working classes who do not smoke and do not drink should contribute nothing to the Revenue. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!" *from the Irish Members.*] If that is the view of hon. Members I am sure it is not the view of the working classes of this country. On the contrary, I believe it to be the general opinion that some small portion of every man's earnings should be contributed to the maintenance of the country. I would defend that principle before any working class audience. A very large question is opened up, but I wish to protest against the view that this tax ought to be entirely swept away, because it is a tax which rests, to a certain extent, on the working classes, and upon those who are in straitened circumstances. The hon. Member rather complained that the consumer will not gain by the 2d., but really his argument would almost go to the point that the consumer would gain very little indeed, even though the duty were taken off altogether.

MR. PICTON: My argument is that we have no coin which represents half a farthing.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member made a mistake of supreme importance in this connection. Tea is not always sold by weight at all, but by the packet. In Whitechapel an enormous quantity of tea is sold in ha'porths. The customer asks for a ha'porth and gets a certain amount of tea for the halfpenny. If the tea costs so much less the customer ought to get so much more in quantity for his halfpenny. I do not say that that will be so. It rests entirely with the good faith of dealers whether they get honest quantity and quality. I think the argument that the remission of 2d. will not benefit the consumer may be pushed a great deal too far, because, if it were well founded, it would almost go to show that you could never make reductions in articles of consumption. Wherever a reduction is made in the duty upon an article of general consumption, it should certainly go to the benefit of the consumers, and consequently they ought to feel the full benefit of this reduction of 2d. I believe that, where competition is good and effective, the consumers will get the benefit, and I have heard already, from many parts of the country, that grocers have advertised that the price of tea of the same quality has even now been reduced by 2d. per lb. In a vast number of places, the 2d. will distinctly go to the working classes and to the purchasers of tea; and where tea is sold not by weight, but by packet, it is possible to give the working classes immediately and easily the full benefit, and I hope it will be done. Now, I owe an apology to a portion of the tea trade, who think themselves aggrieved by certain words which I used the other day. I said that tea could be bought at 11d. and 1s., and that it was sold in certain villages at 2s., and even 3s. I have received vast numbers of communications from grocers and others on the subject, and I have to express my regret if I have, even unintentionally, in any way exaggerated the situation. But there is a large quantity of tea that is dealt with in this way; it is bought at 6d. or 7d., being separated into two qualities, of which the inferior would only cost 5d. or 6d., at most. That tea is sold somewhere. Is it sold to the better classes who are paying 1s. 6d. for their tea? While I express my regret to those to whom it is due, I am bound to say that I had in my mind dealers in distant villages, where there is no sufficient competition, and I know, as a fact, that in many such villages tea of no good quality, which ought not to cost more than 11d. originally, is sold at 3s. per lb. The Committee will forgive me if I dwell upon this matter for a moment. I think the tea dealers have a right to ask for an explanation on my part, and the Committee also have a right to an explanation how the working classes are to get the benefit of the 2d. This is no new question, but for years past I have thought that the organisations of distribution are too imperfect, and that the consumers generally do not get sufficiently the value when prices are cut down. I attach less importance to letters which I have received couched in identic language, than to some other letters, which are evidently genuine. I have not had time to make an inquiry as to what the facts are in regard to distant villages, but I have made inquiries, since yesterday, as to how tea is sold in parts of East London. An officer connected with the Customs went round to 24 different places, in order to see how the article is sold, and at what price. He bought a halfpenny worth of tea in each place, and it has been weighed since, and the samples work out at the following prices per lb. Sample No. 1 weighed ·49 of an ounce, and it worked out at 2s. 8½d. per lb. The other samples worked out 3s. 9d., 3s. 7d., 3s. 11d., 2s. 11d., 2s. 10d., 3s. 7d., and so on. One of the common facts of the system is that the dealers refuse to sell half-an-ounce. They say "We cannot give half-an-ounce, but here is a packet for a halfpenny." Now, I say, that that is a very unsatisfactory system. Of course, there must be a large profit when an article is sold in these small quantities; but when we find that tea which is not worth 1s. per lb., or even if it be worth more than 1s., say 1s. 3d. or 1s. 4d., costs the retail consumer 3s. per lb., I say that that is not a satisfactory state of things. What I want to call attention to is this, that by the system of selling so much for a given sum dealers have it in their power to take the whole of the concession from the working classes. With regard to the House Duty, I entirely differ from the hon. Member. He seems to think that the benefit of the relief will not be appreciated, but that is because he takes a grandiose view of relief and of income. I know, from communications I have received, that the reduction measured by the hon. Member at 15s. a year, is a matter of considerable personal importance to persons occupying houses between £20 and £40 a year.

MR. PICTON: Fifteen shillings a year would be the reduction to a man occupying a house at £60 a year.

*MR. GOSCHEN: It is not only the question of the amount of the tax, but of other burdens in addition. If we add together the whole amount of duties paid by this class, it will be found that they are very heavy compared with those paid by the wealthy, and they feel that this 15s. is given to them as an acknowledgment of the principle that they should not be taxed more than is proportionate to their means. I have endeavoured, in constructing the Budget, to consider, as fairly as I could, the claims of every class of taxpayer. I have endeavoured, not only to consider the absolute pecuniary relief that can be afforded, but also the claims of classes of taxpayers all round, and the hon. Member is unjust in calling this a class Budget. I have endeavoured to lighten the burdens of taxation as far as I fairly could, and I believe that considerable gain will accrue to the working classes from the reduction of the Tea Duty.

(3.28.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I do not rise for the purpose of discussing the Budget generally, but one observation made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer is so important that it ought not to be passed over without notice. It is one which, as a principle of finance, may have a large and extensive future operation. The right hon. Gentleman spoke with reference to the House Duty, and said that he attached value to it, as establishing the principle of graduation in taxation. He has said that it is not merely the money he considers, but the fact that the rate at which the tax should be levied should be less in the case of persons with small incomes. That is a very important principle of finance, and is the one which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has adopted as his basis in dealing with the Inhabited House Duty. This may be only a small beginning, but it opens up a large prospect in the future. I believe that it is a sound principle of finance, and it is one which I am not sorry the right hon. Gentlemen should have adopted as the principle upon which he is, more or less, constructing his Budget. I thought it necessary to take notice of this because the principle itself is far more important than the application of it the Chancellor of the Exchequer is making to-day. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has given an explanation of his statement the other day in reference to the dealers in tea. I have myself received a large number of telegrams from dealers in tea, complaining very much of what was said the other night. They seem to have taken amiss what the right hon. Gentleman said, but I hope now that they will prove themselves in no way open to the imputation they supposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer cast upon them, by giving the consumers full advantage of the concession made in the Budget proposal. We shall have an opportunity, upon the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, of referring to the Budget as a whole, and I do not wish to enter on the subject now; the only criticism I am now disposed to make as to the Budget is that there are rather too many bites to too many cherries. I would rather there had been a larger dealing with fewer subjects. I am sure we must all feel that this Tea Duty cannot remain upon its present footing. In reference to the Inhabited House Duty I am not sure that I can quite agree with my hon. Friend below the Gangway. I believe that a larger dealing with it would have been a great relief. The duty is unequal in itself, and is felt to be extremely hard. On small houses the duty is levied to the full value of the house, but we know that on large houses, large country houses especially, the assessment is ludicrously below the value. A man who lives in a house of £50 or £100 has his house valued to the full extent, but a man who lives in what, practically, is a palace is assessed at £300 or £400. This inequality is in itself a great objection to the tax; the highest value bears the lowest burden of taxation. I do not know that this can be redressed except by getting rid of the tax altogether. I know that there have been strong desires expressed for the remission of a penny from the Income Tax; but it should be observed that the remission of the whole of the Inhabited House Duty would amount to less than the remission of a penny on the Income Tax. Of course the remission of a penny on the Income Tax would be the greater boon to the richer classes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! We are now engaged with a particular Resolution having reference to the Tea Duty, and it would be against the usual practice to discuss the general effect of the Resolutions, as may be done when the Bill itself is before the House.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The Income Tax Resolution comes next.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I bow to your decision, Sir; but my excuse must be that I was following the example of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE CHAIRMAN: A reference by way of illustration in a general way may be permitted, but not entrance into a subject beyond the scope of the Resolution.

MR. CRAIG (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Before we pass from the subject, I should like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is possible to introduce a measure to compel the sale of tea by weight whenever a purchaser demands it?

MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I should be glad to learn on what date the reduction of the duty is proposed.

(3.40.) MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): There is this disadvantage in taking off part of a duty, that the cost of collection remains the same whether the duty is 6d. or 4d. I rejoice in the fact of the reduction, for I believe that in a short time the Tea Duty will have to go altogether. I am one of those who would gladly see the duty taken off. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman need have any fear, if the duty is abolished, that some portion of the community will escape their portion of taxation. I do not quite see how a man can do that unless he is a very exceptional person indeed. I would remind the Committee that those who pay the largest share of this tax are the poorest people among taxpayers. Our system lays the greatest burden on the weakest shoulders. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer could see his way to abolishing the Tea Duty, and adding something in the shape of a regulation of the Death Duties, he would do something to remedy this mistake, and I hope this view will be accepted in the future. A successful Government will endeavour to make the path of the poor smoother, and certainly any proposal to lighten the burdens of the poor will have our support. For the reductions the right hon. Gentleman has made I thank him, though I wish he had been a little bolder. I hope future Chancellors will continue the work he has begun.

*(3.42.) SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I only rise to confirm the statement of my hon. Friend the Member for Tottenham (Mr. Howard), as to the feeling of the retail tea traders. I wish to express my regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has dealt with the Tea Duty instead of the Income Tax, and I differ entirely from the view expressed by the hon. Member for Bristol.

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): We have wandered away somewhat from the incidence of the duty before us. I wish to point out how the duty works in the percentage paid. Tea at 4d. per lb. has, I believe, been sold for years past in the London market, and recently I saw tea siftings quoted at 2d. per lb. Yet this equally pays the duty with the high-priced teas. The new duty on the tea at 2d. will be 200 per cent., while on tea at 2s. 7½d. it will be only 20 per cent. Whatever may be said in favour of or against an *ad valorem* duty, this at least must be allowed, that the richer classes escape the burden of taxation to an extraordinary degree. I should like to say a word or two in vindication of the poorer dealers in tea. I do not think anyone who knows the circumstances of the poorer class of shopkeepers in London, those who retail to the poorer classes. will think their lot at all an enviable one. In this one article of tea, that which is represented as the sale of 1lb. means the weighing and wrapping of, perhaps, 32 ½ oz. parcels and 32 payments. It is hardly fair, and does not help us to a right judgment, to tabulate this as the sale of 1lb. in one parcel. You must take into consideration these conditions in contrasting the prices charged to small consumers with the prime cost of the article.

(3.44.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): It seems to me we are engaged in the somewhat ungracious task of looking a gift horse in the mouth. Now, in my view, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not see his way to give us a free breakfast table, he has made a great mistake in not giving us free education, which has been almost promised by the Government, and which we are bound to have. It is a great mistake to make a remission in a way that is not sufficiently felt; the right hon. Gentleman might have given it in a manner that would have been thoroughly felt throughout the length and breadth of the land. I disclaim all sympathy with the view of the hon. Baronet opposite in reference to the Income Tax, and I was struck with the remarks in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect to the effect of taxation on the richer and poorer classes. I am not sorry to hear the defence of the grocers, and I admit their difficulties; still I hope the observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be appreciated, and that their effect will be to assist the consumers to obtain the benefit of remissions of taxation.

*(3.46.) MR. GOSCHEN: As to the time when we propose this reduction shall take effect I mentioned, at an earlier period, that I am making every inquiry to find what would cause the least disturbance in the trade. While, on the one hand, I have had many desires expressed that the change shall not take place at a very early period, on the other hand I have had remonstrances against delay. My answer to either must be the same, that I hope to give the information within the next couple of days. In reply to what has been said by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Halley Stewart) I have to say that I did not intend to make any charge against grocers and others. I have been charged with exaggerating the difference between the cost price of tea and the price at which it is sold to the consumers, and I produced the figures to show that, from whatever cause it may arise, I attached no blame

to anybody; the difference is extremely wide; it is for the Committee and for the public to judge if they consider the difference was exaggerated at all.

MR. PICTON: There seems to be an impression that I have an objection to the reduction of the Inhabited House Duty, but that is not so. As between the two I prefer the abolition of the Tea Duty.

MR. CRAIG: The right hon. Gentleman has overlooked the question I addressed to him, whether it is within the power of the Government to provide for the sale of tea by weight in the same way as the retail sale of coal is regulated?

*MR. GOSCHEN: That is a matter upon which I cannot answer off-hand; it requires some consideration, and is not without difficulty. There is the convenience of the small consumers to be considered, and the question of interfering with the progress of the trade. It is, however, a matter worthy of attention, and this it shall have.

Question put, and agreed to.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 195.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. COURTNEY in the Chair.]

Clause 2.

(4.3.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Before the 2nd clause is passed I should just like to ask the representative of the India Office whether it is usual, instead of saying in each case "The Secretary for India in Council," to insert a provision to the effect that wherever the term "The Secretary of State" is used, it shall mean "The Secretary for India in Council." It seems to me very misleading, and I think it would be better in every case to say "The Secretary for India in Council." I should like to know what is the usual practice.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have no doubt that the usual practice has been adhered to. All these Acts are drawn by one draftsman, and there is a common form.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I wish to remind the Committee that this Bill was closured after 10 minutes' discussion on the Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) and in the absence of the representative of the India Office. I am anxious for an explanation on several important points with regard to this clause, and, hitherto, we have had no proper opportunity for discussing the matter, or for obtaining an explanation. I wish to give the Under-Secretary for India (Sir J. Gorst) an opportunity of giving us some explanation, and, with that view, I propose to move to amend this clause by reducing the amount proposed to be granted by the sum of £500,000. There are many questions on which I should like to obtain information. It seems to me that this is a notable instance of that which I have several times drawn the attention of the House to, namely, the abuse, as I regard it, of the system of guaranteeing Indian Railway Companies. I am very much disposed to sympathise with what, judging from his action, appears to be the view of the Under Secretary for India, namely, that the less the House of Commons interferes with Indian affairs the better. An exception ought, however, in my opinion, to be made with regard to financial matters. When it is necessary to come to Parliament for powers to deal with financial matters, it is well that some attention should be paid to the demand, and that the debate should not be closured after a 10 minutes' interval. I think this is a notable example of the extent to which the system of Government guarantees is carried. I am told that there are hon. Members who intend to oppose this clause altogether. I do not quite sympathise with them, because I am very much in favour of Indian railways being acquired by the State. Therefore, I am afraid I cannot vote with my hon. Friends. My opposition is not directed against the purchase of this railway, but is confined to the extravagant terms on which the projected purchase is based. I am afraid that we are bound to these extravagant terms, but I object to the vicious system under which we are continually guaranteeing new Indian railways.

When the construction of railways in India was in its infancy it was wise and just that considerable guarantees should be given, and the profit paid to the promoters of the early lines was legitimate. This South Indian Railway is not one of those old railways, but is a modern line. I think the Under Secretary mentioned 1873 as the date at which the railway was guaranteed. It has never approached paying the guarantee. It has been a continual loss to the Government of India, and now they want to buy at a very large premium—I believe a premium of about 30 per cent. It must have been a very unprofitable contract; and if the people of India have had to pay a very heavy fine on account of the improvidence of such transactions, we certainly ought not to go on giving fresh guarantees, as has been done in the course of the last few years. I understood the other day that it was not proposed to give any more guarantees. I hope my impression on that point will be confirmed, and that we shall avoid such jobs in the future by having no more guarantees. I cannot understand how there is to be a profit out of the transaction which this Bill is intended to authorise. I should like the Under Secretary for India to tell us what is now proposed. I observe a very peculiar provision in the Bill, namely, that the Government should raise money by loan or by Debentures, or in the shape of Capital Stock. I know that in several cases these railways have been bought up by the Government of India—I think to the advantage of the State. The Bombay and Baroda Railway has not yet been bought up by the Government of India; but the Government have leased the railway on certain terms, and the result is that a very large addition has been made to the profits of the line—profits which are, to a great extent, earned by the leased line. I think that the £100 shares of that line now stand at something like £185. I am, however, as I have said, not opposed to the purchase of this railway. I only want to know that the terms are not extravagant, and that nothing is conceded to the railway beyond what, in the strictest terms of our bargain, we are bound to concede. I beg to move that the sum mentioned in the clause be reduced by £500,000.

Amendment proposed, Clause 2, page 2, line 15, to leave out £5,200,000, to insert £4,700,000.—(*Sir G. Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words '£5,200,000' stand part of the Clause."

*(4.12.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I do not think I should be in order in following the hon. Gentleman in all the remarks on Indian railway policy which he has engrafted on his Amendment. But it will, perhaps, shorten the debate if I so far follow the hon. Member as to explain what is meant by this clause of the Bill. In this case it is not for the Committee to sanction any guarantee. That was done long ago. It is an inheritance which we have obtained from our forefathers. I believe that if it were in order to discuss the past with the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, I could show that the conduct of the Government in former days in guaranteeing these railways was not so extravagant and foolish as he seems to think. That is, however, necessarily a matter of ancient history with which we have at the present moment nothing to do. We came into an inheritance under which the Government of India was bound to pay the guaranteed interest on this railway, and we shall have to go on paying it.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Will you mention the date at which the guarantee was given?

*SIR J. GORST: It was long before the year 1873; because in that year two railways then guaranteed were amalgamated under the name of the South Indian Railway. Since that time the Government have had to pay the guaranteed interest. They have to pay 5 per cent. on upwards of £3,000,000 of Stock. The hon. Member for Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor) shakes his head. Perhaps he will allow me first to make my statement, and then he can make his. This was the state of things before the purchase was effected. The Indian Government had to pay 5 per cent. on £3,066,344 of Stock. That amounts to a sum of £153,317 a year. It also had to pay 4¾ per cent. on a further sum of £142,164 of Stock. That amounts to £6,753. The amount of guaranteed interest which the Government, therefore, had to pay on the Stock of the Railway Company was £160,070. They had, besides that, to pay a guaranteed interest on Debentures. They had to pay 3½ per cent. on the £756,300 of Debentures, amounting to £26,470, and 3¼ per cent. upon £313,700 of Debentures, amounting to £10,195. The total guaranteed interest which the Government had to pay on Debentures, therefore, amounted to £36,665, making a grand total which the Government of India had to pay to the company of £196,735. That was the state of things on the 1st of March of the present year. On that date the Secretary for India had the right to purchase the railway. Of course, it was his duty to consider whether it was to the interest of the taxpayers of India that he should exercise that right or not. The price he was to give was not a matter of discretion, as the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy seems to think. The bargain was made in the year 1873, and, if purchased at all, the railway had to be purchased at a certain specified rate. The Secretary of State had no choice in the matter. He could buy it at that rate or could let it alone. The price was settled by the contract made in 1873. It was a sum equal in amount to the value of all the shares and Stock of the company, calculated according to the mean market value during the three years immediately preceding the expiration of the year during the six months after the expiration of which notice was given. The notice was given in March. The Secretary of State considered whether it would be for the benefit of the taxpayer of India that he should buy the railway at this price. He assumed he would be able to borrow the money in the English Money Market at the rate of 3 per cent.; at par. That is the assumption, and if the Committee will pass the Bill and allow the Secretary of State to operate upon the London Market no doubt that can be done. If the Committee choose to stop the Bill until advantageous terms are not available, the blame of imposing an additional burden upon the taxpayers of India will rest with the Committee and not with the Secretary of State. If the money can be borrowed, the amount required is the amount stated in this clause of the Bill.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the premium to be paid?

*SIR J. GORST: No premium is to be paid, but the price is settled in the contract.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the price?

*SIR J. GORST: I have read it once. The price to be paid is to be equal to the amount of the value of the shares.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the value according to the calculation?

*SIR J. GORST: I will tell the hon. Member if he will not interrupt me. According to the calculation, the sum of money which is to be paid is £5,267,557.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the percentage on the original capital?

*SIR J. GORST: That is the price which is to be paid. I hope the rest of the Committee will understand the point. There is a contract fixing a certain sum of money. That sum of money is paid by the Secretary of State, and thereupon the line becomes the property of the Government. That being the sum, the interest, at 3 per cent. upon that sum, is £158,026, and there is a payment to be made to the Bank of England for carrying out the transaction, which amounts to £360 per £1,000,000 of Stock. That payment amounts, therefore, to £1,896. That is the cost of carrying out the transaction, making the total annual charge in the future, £159,922. Well then, inasmuch as the charge in question is £197,000, it is obvious that it is to the interest of the taxpayer of India that you should free India of that charge of £196,000 by incurring the liability for a future charge of £160,000. The annual saving to be effected to the taxpayer of India from the time that the transaction is completed will be £36,813. Now, that is the whole history of the transaction. The Secretary of State, having found that he could effect a saving of that amount to the taxpayer of India, gave notice to the Railway Company. The Government is now liable to pay that sum to the Railway Company. It only requires the sanction of the House to enable the Secretary of State to raise the money in the most convenient way—in the way in which it would be the least burdensome to the taxpayer of India to fulfil the obligation which is already incurred, and which the Secretary of State is legally bound to carry out. This explanation has been as short as I could make it, but I hope it has been satisfactory to the Committee. All that is really now required is that the House should sanction the Secretary of State borrowing in the London Money Market the sum of money which he has contracted to pay, because by doing it he will relieve the taxpayers of India from the obligation to which they would have been otherwise subjected.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I really do not know why the Under Secretary of State should have such an extreme objection to explain to us the exact terms in which this railway is to be taken over. The bargain was not that the railway should be taken over at a fixed sum, but that it should be taken over at a price equal to the average price for three years succeeding the date of the notice. That involves a very considerable premium upon the original capital. I want to know what the price was at which each £100 of the railway was taken over? The market price, I gather, was £130, but I wish the Under Secretary to tell us exactly what the sum was.

*SIR J. GORST: I misunderstood the hon. Member's question. If he merely asks what was the mean market value I may tell him that is 131·116279.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Now I understand it has been taken over at a premium of a little over 31 per cent. The result is that the railway, which has never approached paying the sum required to meet the guarantee, is to be taken over at a premium of 31 per cent. Such being the case, the calculation of the Secretary of State is that he can borrow money at 3 per cent., and that the result will be a large gain to the taxpayers of India. I want to know whether the Under Secretary can tell us deliberately whether there is any reason for believing that he can borrow in the English Money Market at par at 3 per cent. A further point I want to know is whether this £196,753 is payable annually—whether it is a permanent or a terminal annuity? If it is a terminal annuity is there not something which ought to be deducted?

*SIR J. GORST: The payment on one line is for 999 years, and on the other for 99 years. With regard to the price at which the Indian Government can borrow money, the hon. Member would do well to study the Money Market and the *Times*. My impression is that the Stock is above par.

(4.26.) MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India has had the very great advantage of being able to lay before the House a satisfactory and complete answer to the questions addressed to him from above the Gangway; but those questions were of so elementary a kind that one might almost have been spared them. My objection to this clause is of a very different character. If hon. Members had the time and convenience, I should invite them to examine for themselves the figures which bear on this matter in the account which has been furnished to us by the Indian Authorities. They will find that no two of the statements furnished to the House of Commons are in accord with each other. The Indian Financial Statement with regard to railways, the statement of the moral and material progress of India, and Blue Books which relate to railways, the annual Report with regard to administration of railway work and other things, are all different. It is perfectly impossible to make any two of them agree. The same observation applies with respect to the figures of Indian finance; they are absolutely misleading. With regard to the loss by exchange, those railway accounts are so manipulated that it is almost possible to produce any result you set yourself to produce with respect to the railways. But we have had lately, during the last two years, some further and better light in regard to their condition than we had previously. I mean a Report by an officer—I think his name is Colonel Conway Gordon—in which he deals at very much greater length and more clearly than any of his predecessors with these railway accounts. What do we learn? I ventured to say in the House some months ago that the accounts of these railways were cooked. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was very much shocked, and he said it was an unworthy suggestion; but I will quote an authority, which I think the Government cannot reasonably object to, and that is the authority of the *Times* newspaper, in an article reviewing this very matter of the Guaranteed Railways, including the South Indian Railways. It says—

> "That from first to last the grand total loss—actual and prospective—from the Guaranteed Railways is set down at £34,844,000."

"The State lines," the writer of the article says,

> "Have been always known to be unprofitable as a commercial undertaking, however defensible for military reasons;"

but there is an incorrect impression as to the Guaranteed Lines. They have been looked on in the past as yielding a steady revenue to the State, but now we are told the state of things is the very opposite. The explanation is that a sort of juggle has been practised over the shifting value of the rupee. The liabilities of the Guaranteed Lines have been incurred in sterling, and in sterling must be paid, while the receipts have been counted in rupees at an advancing rate of exchange, thus making the railways to appear what in reality they are not. That is a perfectly fair criticism, though I quote it from the *Times*, and I think it applies to every branch of Indian administration, as well as the railways. But in order to show how impossible it is to arrive at an exact financial estimate in connection with this proposed transaction, I find from the Revenue Account, that from the opening of the railway to the 31st March, 1888, the line has cost the Government 1,917,313 tens of rupees. The Railway Report gives the loss down to the 13th June, 1888, as £1,948,000. These two accounts are absolutely irreconcilable, because the one which gives the loss in sterling shows a total which is much greater than that which gives the loss in rupees, whatever rate of exchange you may take. According to the Act of 1874, the rate of exchange was to be 1s. 11d., so that on this item alone there is an error of nearly £250,000. Under these circumstances, it is not unnatural that inquiries should be made as to the exact figures, whether in rupees or in sterling, that the Government bases its proposal upon when it asks us to agree to this Vote. The Government say that the adoption of this scheme will enable them to economise to the extent of £36,000 a year. Well, I demur to that statement. I think it proceeds upon a fallacy—the fallacy that because a certain half-year's accounts of the company showed so small a margin of receipts over working expenses that the Government had to pay for that half-year a large sum of money to meet the guarantee interest, therefore that liability is certain to recur annually for 999 years. I say that this is a fallacy, and I base my objection to it on the accounts of the railway itself, from which I find that so far from such an amount of money being required in a normal half-year, no such sum has ever been required before, and it often happens that the earnings of the railway have proved nearly sufficient to meet the liability. Now, Sir, the capital expended to the 31st December, 1888, was £4,695,000. For that year, the net revenue, after paying working expenses, was £160,000. The amount required to meet the guaranteed interest on the capital paid up and expended was, I think, £213,604. If you deduct the net revenue for the year at £160,000 from the total guaranteed interest, the balance for which the Government is really responsible is only £53,345. I do not know the rate at which the Government of India can borrow money in the London Money Market at the present time; but taking the account for the year 1888—the last year for which I, at any rate, have been enabled to obtain a complete account—it is perfectly clear that it requires nothing like £5,000,000 to meet the liabilities. I think the sum of £1,700,000 at the very outside would amply and adequately provide any funds necessary to secure the annual income for meeting any liabilities on the part of the company. If the Indian Government are able to raise money at 3 per cent., you do not want more than £1,750,000 to meet this liability. Now, the Government, for some reason or other, have apparently jumped at the opportunity of acting under the terms of the contract with the company, and have given notice of their intention to purchase the railway, and to purchase it under circumstances which are abnormally unfavourable. If they had considered the amount which they had been called upon to pay over and above the net Revenue during the last 10 years, they would have found that they did not require anything like the amount of money they now ask for. The arrangement as to price was entered into in the original contract in 1874, and it was practically the same as was embodied in the contract with the Carnatic Company 16 or 18 years before that. When the Government chooses, at a certain period, to give notice to buy up the line on the average of three years' price of the share capital, is it not perfectly plain that the market value of the share capital has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the financial history of the line? Whether the line is making an enormous fortune or whether it is a hopeless failure, the Government guarantee of 5 per cent. will always keep the Stock up to the figures at which it now stands, namely, 131; and that is the price which is secured by the shareholders whenever they wish to part with their shares. In the case of a railway which, as a going concern, pays such a dividend as to justify a premium, the shareholder gets credit for that. Suppose the Indian Government purchases a line, which is very successful as a business concern, you will be in the position in which, if you had not purchased, and the company had gone on working the line, you, as a Government, would not have been called upon to pay a single farthing in respect of the guarantee of 5 per cent.; and in such a case there could be no reason for asking the House to make an advance for that purpose. But take the other side of the question. Suppose the line is in a bad commercial condition. Do you not see that you lose by making the purchase, because at present you are bound only to pay the 5 per cent., which you have guaranteed, whereas under this Bill you are not only going to make a capital payment which represents a liability equal to 5 per cent., but you are also taking upon yourself the responsibility of working a commercial concern which is hopelessly unsuccessful. On either horn of this dilemma, then, it appears that this proposal of the Government is an unwise one. So far as the shareholders of the line are concerned, it is a matter of supreme indifference to them whether or not the Government buy up the undertaking, for they, at any rate, are secure of 5 per cent. on their investment. It appears to me, on the grounds I have stated, that the Government are making a very great mistake, and I invite the House to consider the arguments I have put before it. Those arguments have not been met by any statement we have heard from the Under Secretary for India. I agree with the observations which have been made with regard to Guaranteed Lines, and that to continue our old policy as to them under the present circumstances would be a very great mistake. It may have had some justification for the past, but there is no doubt that the real secret of success in railway management is the incentive to personal gain and to dividend earning. Only the other day, at the meeting of the Legislative Council, the Public Works Minister, in a discussion on the Budget, spoke of the admirable example set by certain Indian Railway Companies which did not ask for guarantees from the State. I believe if the Government had refused to buy this line, and had left the company to work it under the strict supervision which the State is authorised to exercise, they would have caused this line, which has been increasing its traffic (both goods and passengers) for the last five or six years, to have earned the dividend of 5 per cent. for itself; and if the company had failed to keep the line in repair, if it had failed in any way to do its duty, the Government would have had it in their power, under the Act of 1874, to do what repairs were necessary and to deduct the cost of those repairs from the guaranteed interest. I very much doubt whether the Government have exercised such a power in any case. If they had, I am inclined to think that this question of buying up lines would never have arisen. I invite the Committee to observe this fact, that we have not had a single word from the right hon. Gentleman as to the amount or condition of the rolling stock, as to the condition of the line, or as to the repairs which are likely to be required immediately after the Government takes over the concern. The right hon. Gentleman, too, has not mentioned that there is to remain an undischarged liability of £420,000 on account of the Debenture Bonds.

*SIR J. GORST: That is so. The Debenture Stock is irredeemable.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: There are Debenture Bonds and there is Debenture Stock. As I understand it, the sum of money provided for in the Bill will include the purchase money and a capital sum of £1,700,000 for Debentures, which are to be paid off when they mature. But over and above all, there is a sum of £420,000 which is to remain as a charge on the undertaking. Indeed, it is very difficult to make out what is the exact liability this Bill represents. We do not know the amount of liabilities ahead, or the condition of the line, or the amount and condition of the rolling stock. Yet these are points on which the Committee might reasonably have expected information.

*(4.48.) SIR J. GORST: I think the hon. Member is mistaken in his ideas as to the supposed disastrous results of this proposal. He supposed that the railway might turn out to be an extremely bad concern, and would not pay working expenses. Well, the Government in such a case would not be obliged to go on with it. But, in regard to this particular line, there is no prospect that it will get worse than it is. What is the state of things now? The Government is liable to pay £197,000. Under the Bill it will be liable to pay £160,000, or a saving of £36,800, so that, even if the line only just pays its working expenses, £36,800 will be saved to the Indian taxpayer. But, supposing the line turns out to be an extremely good enterprise, and itself pays not only the guaranteed interest, but has a large surplus of over £200,000 beyond that at present, the Government, under such a state of things, would be relieved of the payment of the guarantee, but would not share in the surplus.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Yet the Government is entitled to a half share.

*SIR J. GORST: Yes; I am wrong in that. But if this Bill is carried, the Government will not only be relieved of the payment of the interest, but the £200,000 will go into the pockets of the taxpayers, so that on either horn of the dilemma the Government would have been a gainer by the transaction. The hon. Member has complained that I have given no information to him about the condition of the railway. My reason for not giving it to him is that such information is not relevant to the question before the Committee. If it had been a discretion as to purchasing the railway, such information would have been extremely relevant and would have had to be taken into consideration; but this is a case in which the price was fixed many years since, and we are bound to buy at that price or not to buy at all. It is because it will be a profitable thing for the Indian Revenue to purchase the line at this price that this transaction is submitted to the Committee for approval, and I hope that this Bill will now be allowed to pass.

(4.53.) MR. A. O'CONNOR: I think the real answer of the Government to the criticisms which have been advanced is to be found in the closing words of the right hon. Gentleman. The Secretary of State has apparently gone to the company and said, "I will buy the line." He has entered into an agreement, which is now of some months standing, for the purchase of the line, and whether that agreement is reasonable or not—I think it is fatuously foolish and extravagant, although the right hon. Gentleman thinks it wise and judicious—the House has no option but to pass the Bill, and is merely going through a pure formality in doing so. It is all a foregone conclusion. True, it is scarcely a dignified position for this Committee to be placed in; and I must complain of the power which enables the Secretary of State to enter into a large negotiation involving the expenditure of millions of money without first obtaining the sanction of the House.

(4.55.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I ask leave to withdraw the Amendment, because I am satisfied, that on the whole, the proposal of the Government will be an advantage to India. But I hope we shall take warning from the result of this transaction and not enter into such imprudent engagements in the future.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clauses agreed to.

Bill reported to the House without Amendment.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, April 24, 1890.

DOCK ACCOMMODATION AT BOMBAY AND GIBRALTAR.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: My Lords, I have two questions which I wish to put to Her Majesty's Government, and I shall not detain the House more than a few minutes in doing so. The first has reference to the proposed Dock at Bombay. I would ask the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) whether, in the agreement about to be made with the Bombay Port Trust, care will be taken that a clause shall be inserted which shall empower Her Majesty's Government to make a prior claim in all cases where it may be necessary for the repair of Her Majesty's ships? Upon this matter I would venture to refer to a remark which fell from my noble Friend, in which he spoke of the dock at Bombay as being intended for Indian and not for Imperial purposes. I think any dock there which is to be used at all by the Navy must be regarded as not for the use of the ships on the Station—not confined to vessels employed merely on the Indian Station, but extending to vessels which sail up the Persian Gulf, patrolling all those waters, and going as far as Zanzibar. My second question is as to the proposed dock at Gibraltar, and with regard to that I would ask the Government whether they propose to introduce a similar clause into any agreement in reference to the dock, and also whether they will take into consideration the importance of adding a clause which will enable the Government in case of war, or in any case of necessity, to purchase the dock for their own use? I need not remind the House that Gibraltar is a military rather than a commercial port; and it seems to me that, if we do assume the great responsibility which rests upon us of making a dock not entirely belonging to Government, that the Government should in all cases have a prior claim to the use of it. Before I sit down I wish to refer to some words which fell from a Member of the Government lately, which have led me to think that after all the Government intend to construct the dock themselves, and to take it out of private hands. That is surely the only course worthy of a great naval country like this, for the sum of £350,000, which will be required, is a mere flea-bite considering that our naval interest upon that portion of the seas alone must be valued at £10,000,000 sterling.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): My Lords, with reference to the Port Trust Dock at Bombay, the noble Viscount will remember that when I was asked a similar question before the Recess I gave a provisional answer, stating my belief that the Government had the power of using that dock whenever they wanted it for Her Majesty's ships. I have since made inquiry into the matter, and I have much pleasure in informing the noble Viscount that this point was not lost sight of when sanction was given to the construction of the graving dock, and that the Bombay Port Trust have agreed to the Government having a preferential right to the use of it in time of emergency.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: With regard to the second question of the noble Viscount as to the dock at Gibraltar, when he mentioned the matter early in the Session I told the noble Viscount that a site had been selected, and that in connection with the works it was proposed to extend the new mole some 1,600ft. We then proposed to carry it out by private enterprise, and in the draft agreement which was then drawn up on the subject clauses, such as the noble Viscount refers to, were inserted, to the effect that the Government were to have priority of claim for docking Her Majesty's ships, and Government were to have the power of acquiring the dock by purchase, not only in the event of war, but in any other circumstances when such a course might be desirable. Since then certain difficulties have been pointed out with regard to the construction of the dock by private enterprise—difficulties which require very careful consideration. A small Departmental Committee has been appointed to consider the whole subject and to suggest the best way of carrying out the work which the Admiralty are so desirous to see concluded.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, April 24, 1890.

DEMOLITION OF A HINDOO TEMPLE AT DURBUNGA.

MR. KEAY: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he has now received the particulars regarding the demolition of a Hindoo Temple at Durbunga, the responsibility for which was accepted by Mr. Beadon, the civil officer of the district; whether he has noticed a telegram from the Calcutta correspondent of the *Daily News*, published on 19th instant, stating that the Hindoo community are not satisfied with the decision of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, removing Mr. Beadon to another district, and demand that he should be punished; whether this Mr. Beadon is the same officer who, when Acting Deputy Commissioner at Hazareebagh, was severely censured by order of the Secretary of State for India in consequence of his action in what was known as the "Hazareebagh Gaol Case," and directed to make a full apology to the Gaol Superintendent, whom he had wrongfully accused of tampering with the official records under his charge; and whether he will make inquiry into the conduct and antecedents of the officer in question, with the view of determining whether mere removal to another district is sufficient punishment for his conduct in the present case?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has received no official information respecting the demolition of the Indian Temple at Durbunga. His attention has been called to the telegram only by the question. The facts stated respecting Mr. Beadon are not correct. The matter occurred more than 15 years ago. Mr. Beadon was not censured by the Secretary of State, nor ordered to apologise for making a wrongful accusation. The Secretary of State sees no reason for his interference in the matter.

THE AUSTRALIAN AND INDIAN MAILS.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether proposals were made to the Australian Colonies some time ago to the effect that the rates both out and home might with advantage be reduced to 3d. per letter by the direct ocean route, and declined; whether the Colonies were unanimous in their decision; and whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to reduce the outward rate by all routes to 2½d. per letter in the event of the refusal of the Colonies and India to make a similar reduction homewards?

*MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, may I ask if he is aware that the Australian people and Press are strongly in favour of the reduction, and that the Australian Chancellors of the Exchequer opposed it simply upon fiscal grounds, sitting as tightly on the Australian Treasury Chests as an English Chancellor of the Exchequer does here?

*MR. RAIKES: The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. H. Heaton) is perhaps not aware that to-morrow I am to have an official interview with the Representatives of the Australian Colonies. Under those circumstances, I do not think it is desirable to enter further into the question which he has raised. In reply to the question upon the Paper, I have to say that in 1887 proposals were made to the Australasian Colonies to institute a 3d. or 4d. postage on letters forwarded between this country and the Colonies, in both directions, by the all sea route. My own wish was to establish a 3d. rate, but, at a Conference held in Sydney, the Colonies adopted a Resolution in favour of a 4d. rate; and, in deference to their wishes, that rate was adopted. As regards the last part of the hon. Member's question, I am not in a position to add anything to the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his recent Budget Speech.

THE DUTY ON CURRANTS AND TEA.

MR. OLDROYD (Dewsbury): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, having regard to the large stocks of currants now in the hands of the trade, he will consider the expediency of deferring the reduction of the duty on currants until Monday, the 1st of September, the date at which the importation of the new crop practically commences?

*MR. GOSCHEN: I hope the House will allow me to answer this question somewhat fully, as I have received an enormous number of letters and telegrams on the subject. I have done my best to see what would be the fairest manner of acting under the circumstances with regard to this reduction of the duty on currants; and I have distinctly come to the conclusion that it would be a great mistake, and would hamper business in a manner not to be sanctioned, if a postponement to the 1st of September were to take place. I have taken the opinion not only of importers and of wholesale men, but also of grocers and retailers in various parts of the country. The stocks are unusually low; and if a postponement to the 1st of September takes place it would disorganise the whole of the trade and would diminish the consumption of the article, while it is doubtful even whether it would benefit the people who ask for the postponement. The majority of the comparatively small number who ask for the extension are Co-operative Societies. I should be very sorry to inflict any loss upon these Societies, but they are precisely the bodies who can best recoup themselves; because, if they reduce the price of currants while they have got duty-paid stocks at the higher duty, their members, if they lose as co-operators, would gain as consumers at the cheaper price. So it strikes me that the loss would not be so great as these Societies anticipate. At all events, the general upshot of the inquiries is that it would be impossible to grant the long delay which has been asked for. Comparatively few demands have been made for an extension of a fortnight or a month. Practically the same considerations apply to the reduction of the Tea Duty; but the enormous majority of the grocers who have been consulted, and of all persons connected with the trade, beg me not to postpone the reduction of the duty beyond the 1st of May. Many of them have already made their arrangements, and in many cases the prices have already been reduced. I have been informed, and believe, that great confusion would arise from any change in the dates originally fixed. The allowance of a drawback in the case of tea and currants would be quite out of the question. I hope that hon. Members will allow me to make this public answer to the numerous private communications that have been made to me on these subjects.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, April 25, 1890.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 59.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Viscount Cross): My Lords, at the time this Railway Scheme was practically framed the usual stipulation was made for a proviso that the Government might buy it within a certain time. In accordance with that provision notice had to be given in March last. That notice has been given by the Secretary of State in Council, and this Bill is simply to provide the funds required for the purpose, which will effect a saving of £36,000 a year to the Indian Revenue.

Bill read 2^a (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, April 25, 1890.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS—MINUTES OF THE LATE AND PRESENT VICEROYS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is a fact that the late Viceroy and the present Viceroy of India have, in Minutes, severally addressed to the Secretary of State, expressed opinions in favour of the introduction of the elective principle in any reform of the Indian Councils; and, if so, whether he will lay such Minutes upon the Table of the House?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The Papers asked for in the question are confidential communications which have been made by the Viceroys of India to the Secretary of State. It has already been stated in both Houses of Parliament that these Papers cannot be given, with due regard to the interests of the Public Service. Publication of such documents would put a stop to those confidential relations between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy of India, which it is essential to maintain. As the Papers cannot be produced, I cannot answer the inquiry as to the nature of their contents.

THE INDIAN FINANCE COMMITTEE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can now state whether any, and which, of the recommendations made by the Indian Finance Committee on 20th December, 1886, have been accepted and acted upon, and what are the savings, specifying such savings, which have been effected?

***SIR J. GORST**: The recommendations which have been adopted and are now being acted on are:—Arrangements with Provincial Governments in 1887 Rx640,100; further reductions in provincial expenditure Rx57,480; reorganisation of Public Works Department Rx157,500; allowances for hill stations and Simla travelling allowances Rx12,600; various (Salt and Customs, High Courts, Presidency allowances, &c.) Rx45,540; supplementary proposals Rx182,648, being a gross total of Rx1,095,868. Some of these reductions, although accepted, can only take place gradually.

TEA AND CURRANT DUTIES.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered the complaints of grocers who have recently laid in large stocks of tea, and also the complaints of Co-operative Distributive Societies who have large stocks of tea and currants; and whether he will, by a repayment of the whole or part of the duty, or by a postponement of the dates at which the new scales of duty are to come in force, minimise the loss to such traders and Societies?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: I am afraid I can only give the same answer as I gave yesterday. I would point out to the hon. Member that in the case of Co-operative Associations the members will gain by the lower prices what the Associations might lose in profit.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): At what date will the reduction of the Tea Duties take place?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: The 1st of May.

THE PLATE DUTIES.

MR. H. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is true that a shipping house has offered duties in plate to re-land the plate which has been exported, so as to enable them to re-ship it again?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: I have heard of that plan—or that scheme, perhaps, would be the more proper appellation; but, fortunately, there are existing means to check it and I am glad to be able to state the fact publicly, namely, that the drawback will only be paid where a declaration is made that the plate was exported without any intention of re-landing or re-importing it. Therefore, any persons who would re-export plate under the invitation of such a circular would probably render themselves liable to an action for having signed a bond under what might possibly be considered false pretences. At all events, I am glad to say that, though a shipping agent did send circulars to the whole trade, there has been little or no response to the tempting invitation, and the great bulk of the trade have abstained from having recourse to such methods.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is correctly reported as having said that he has not yet decided as to the Plate Duty, and if in any case, having regard to the large number of intricate technical questions involved in the abolition of the duty which, unless carefully considered with the advice of experts, will involve the trade in serious loss, he proposes to postpone the coming into operation of the new order of things?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: I must have been misreported yesterday. The only question I understood to be put to me was with regard to the question of gold plate and not silver plate. With regard to silver plate, there has been no hesitation whatever. It would be most inconvenient to postpone the date, especially in view of measures which might be taken, such as were alluded to by the hon. Gentleman opposite. Every measure necessary has been taken in concert with men thoroughly acquainted with the trade, and little difficulty is expected in carrying out the matter satisfactorily.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, April 28, 1890.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 59.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without amendment; and to be read 3ª To-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, April 28, 1890.

INDIA—AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has determined on any legislation as to the indebtedness of the agricultural classes in the Central Provinces, which, on 23rd August last, it was stated was "engaging the attention of the Government of India," owing to the Chief Commissioner having reported that—

> "Unless relief in the direction of legislation is afforded, the land will pass into the hands of of the money lenders;"

and whether he can state why, in the admittedly serious condition of affairs, no legislation on the matter was introduced into the Viceroy's Legislative Council during the past Session in Calcutta?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): When the hon. Member put the question upon the Paper the Secretary of State telegraphed to India, and he expected to have an answer by this time, but it has not been received.

BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE—MR. LUSON.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware that grave disaffection exists in Jessore, Bengal, in consequence of the action of Mr. Luson, a member of the Civil Service, towards certain ryots in indigo cultivation tracts; whether certain Hindu Magistrates have been removed from the sub-divisions of Jhinedah and Majurah, Jessore District, to other sub-divisions at the instance of the indigo planters of the district; whether Mr. Luson was appointed to take charge of these sub-divisions; whether such an arrangement is in accordance with the practice in Indian administration; whether he is aware that Mr. Luson was formerly in charge of the neighbouring sub-division of Meturpore, and, while so in charge, ordered 50 villagers to be whipped for fishing, which conduct was characterised by Sir Comer Peterham, the Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta, as violent and illegal; whether the ryots of the sub-divisions of Jhinedah and Majurah have addressed a Petition to Mr. Luson alleging various illegalities and oppressive conduct in his magisterial capacity; whether Mr. Luson, for alleged misdemeanours in reference to indigo cultivation, summarily tried, is now sending cultivators to gaol in batches, and imposing heavy fines; and whether, if these circumstances have not been brought to his notice, the Secretary of State will, without delay, inquire into the facts?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has no ground for supposing that grave disaffection exists in the Jessore district, but he is aware that certain native newspapers have made statements similar to those indicated in the question. The Secretary of State has no official information on the points raised except as to the conviction of villagers by Mr. Luson for illegal fishing. The conviction was quashed, but the Secretary of State is not aware that the Chief Justice stated Mr. Luson's conduct to be violent and illegal. The Secretary of State has no reason to interfere with the vigilance which the Local Government always exercises in matters between indigo planters and ryots.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware from the newspaper reports that such facts are alleged, and if they are not sufficiently grave to require an answer?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State is not in the habit of addressing inquiries to the Local Governments of India in regard to statements in the local newspapers. If the hon. Member will make a proper complaint no doubt it will be made the subject of a Report to the Secretary of State.

SMALLPOX IN CALCUTTA.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he has information of the serious prevalence of smallpox at Calcutta; and whether it is contemplated by a Privy Council Order, or otherwise, to empower Local Authorities to detain in quarantine every ship which is infected with smallpox arriving at British ports?

SIR J. GORST: So far as the Secretary of State's information goes there has been no serious outbreak of smallpox in Calcutta, and nothing to call for special precautions in this country.

HALL-MARKING INDIAN SILVER PLATE.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, before he finally decides upon the question of hall-marking of Indian silver plate, of rupee standard, he will cause inquiry to be made respecting the practice of "soldering" in India on the part of native workmen; whether this practice varies immensely; whether any fixed standard would apply to Indian art workmanship; and, whether, in view of the valuable Reports of Her Majesty's Consuls, in Parliamentary Paper, No. 59, Foreign Countries (Gold and Silver Marking), it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government, before proceeding to amend the laws relating to the hall-marking of gold and silver wares, to refer the matter to a Select Committee?

***THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER** (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): So far as this question refers to India, I can assure the hon. Member that nothing will be done without close consultation with the Government of India, and we are now in communication with the Indian Government on the subject. As regards the modifications in hall-marking law, they are so very slight that we see no necessity for referring this matter to a Select Committee.

***MR. SCHWANN** (Manchester, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Government have decided to prolong the date for the abolition of the duty on gold plate?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: No; I find it is not possible to prolong the date. We have satisfied ourselves that although we might meet some difficulties by postponement, yet out of this new difficulties would arise.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Will the right hon. Gentleman say when the proposal for the change in hall-marking will be before the House?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: Practically, only technical changes will be necessary to break the connection between the levying of the duty and hall-marking; it will not be necessary to make any material alteration of the law in relation to hall-marking.

HALL-MARKING OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will arrange that silver plate shall in future be hall-marked; not only the present standard of ·925 and the Indian standard of ·916, but also the American and French standards of ·900 and the German of ·800; and whether he is aware that gold watch cases are hall-marked from 22 to 9 carats, in order to facilitate trade in foreign and colonial markets, and that it is believed that similar modifications in hall-marking silver plate would help our silversmiths to compete with foreign manufacturers?

MR. GOSCHEN: The answer to the second question is, Yes. As regards the first, I can only refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave last Tuesday. Theoretically I have no objection to the marking of British plate of any quality for exportation, which I understand is what the hon. Member is aiming at. But the great majority of the trade are in favour of compulsory hall-marking, and I do not see how the two can be combined. I may add that as soon as the Plate Duties are abolished, these matters cease to belong to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, April 29, 1890.

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY PURCHASE BILL.—(No. 59.)

Read 3^a (according to order), and passed.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, April 29, 1890.

INDIA—EXPENDITURE IN GWALIOR.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has yet received any information from the Government of India respecting the question asked on 8th April of last year, respecting the number of highly-paid officials in Gwalior, and the desire of the Regency that they should be dismissed; whether he is aware that the sum of 20 lakhs per annum is being expended on the maintenance of the so-called Public Works Department at Gwalior; whether all buildings and main and feeder roads of any value have been completed; whether there has been any effective audit or checking of the accounts of the Department during the past three years, when nearly a crore of rupees has been expended; and whether, in regard to this State, the Ruler of which is still a minor, the Government of India will use its influcnce to prevent the continuance of this expenditure.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): In reply to the first question of the hon. Member, I have to say that the hon. Member himself asked on the 8th of April, 1889, whether the Secretary of State was aware that Mr. Henvay, the Agent of the Governor General, on the 5th of March met the Maharajah of Gwalior, and, in deference to the wishes of His Highness and of the Council of Regency, arranged that a number of the highly-paid foreign officials should leave Gwalior. The Secretary of State was informed by the Government of India on the 28th of June, 1889, that there was no foundation for the statement made, and that during Mr. Henvay's visit to Gwalior no reference was made by the Maharajah, by the Mahareni Regent, or any of the members of the Council of Regency, to the employment of highly-paid foreign officials. The answer to the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative. The expenditure on public works is about 20 laks per annum. The answer to the third question is in the negative. All the works of value have not been completed. The answer to the fourth paragraph is that the Secretary of State has no information as to the audit of the accounts of the Gwalior State. The answer to the fifth paragraph is that the Government of India will use its efforts in the State of Gwalior, as in every other Native State in India, to discourage expenditure which is not for the benefit of the people.

THE CRAWFORD CASE AND THE MAMLATDARS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware that, in addition to the documents given in the recent Return, East India (Crawford Case), there have been Notes, Memorials, Opinions, and Reports to the Bombay Government and to the Government of India respectively, from various high officials, relating to the pledge given to the incriminated Mamlatdars, to induce them to give evidence; and, if so, whether he can state their tenor and effect; and whether he will lay such further documents upon the Table of this House?

Sir J. GORST: In the Papers already presented to Parliament the Government of India gives an account of these Memorials, their tenor and effect and its reason for not forwarding them to the Secretary of State. As the Secretary of State has not received the documents he cannot lay them on the Table. He considers the reasons given by the Government of India for not forwarding them satisfactory.

THE CHIN-LUSHAI EXPEDITION.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I wish to put a question to the Under Secretary of State for India of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether the information now received from the Government of India as to the sickness enables him to correct the answer which he gave to a question addressed to him on the 24th of February, that the accounts of the sickness prevailing in the Expedition had been greatly exaggerated.

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; I am not able to say that more recent information has produced in the mind of the Secretary of State that alteration of opinion which the hon. Member appears to expect.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Does not the information which the right hon. Gentleman has been good enough to furnish me with, show that in the months of December, January, and February a very large number of British officers and British troops were sick? Take, for example, the 21st of December, when 50 men of the Scottish Borderers were sick and 13 out of 49 officers. Under those circumstances, does not the right hon. Gentleman think that my question fairly represented the state of health of the troops at the time I put the question?

SIR J. GORST: The hon. Member is now asking me for my opinion; but I must leave that subordinate to the opinion of the Secretary of State.

Thursday, May 1, 1890.

RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES IN INDIA

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he can lay upon the Table of the House the substance of any Reports received during the last 10 years from officers in charge of districts in India regarding conflicts on the subject of cow-killing or similar religious differences between Hindoos and Mahomedans?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham)**: No, Sir; there are no special Reports made upon conflicts arising from religious differences in India; and such a Return as that asked for is, therefore, impracticable.

LEPROSY IN UPPER BURMA.

MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is a fact, as stated by the Press, "that the prevalence of leprosy in Upper Burma is attracting some attention"; and, if such is the case, whether any practicable steps can be taken by the authorities to prevent its spreading into other parts of Burma?

***SIR J. GORST**: No information has reached the Secretary of State about the prevalence of leprosy in Upper Burma; but he is aware that proposals have been made for establishing, with Government aid, a lepers' home at Mandalay. When the Leper Bill now before the Indian Legislature becomes law, it will become possible to segregate lepers in Upper Burma and for Local Bodies to assign funds for the maintenance of lepers.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, May 2, 1890.

COMMISSION.

The following Bill received the Royal Assent:—

1. South Indian Railway Purchase.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, May 2, 1890.

THE TEA DUTIES—A CORRECTION.

***MR. GOSCHEN**: I regret to have to inform the House that a serious mistake was made in the computations of the price of tea per lb. purchased in the East End of London and given by me to the House in the Debate on the Budget Resolutions. The tea was bought, as I explained, in halfpenny-worths, but the analyst who examined the tea and made the computations of the cost per lb. understood the officer who handed him the samples to say that they were penny packages, not halfpenny packages, and accordingly the cost came out double what it ought to have been. The calculations ought to have been checked before they were sent in to me; but they were hurriedly made on the morning when the samples were received, so as to be ready for me to have them at the House by 2 o'clock. I can only say that both the Customs House officers and myself are extremely sorry that such a mistake should have occurred.

Monday, May 5, 1889.

THE PLATE DUTY.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the abolition of the Plate Duty will carry with it the abolition of the Plate Licence; and, if so, at what date will the licence cease?

*MR. GOSCHEN: No, Sir; it is not intended that the abolition of the Plate Duty will carry with it the abolition of the Plate Licence.

SILVER PLATE.

MR. HENRY J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how drawback can be obtained on silver plate sold and delivered between the present time and such time in June as the Revenue Office may pass them?

*MR. GOSCHEN: I intend to introduce a clause in Committee of the Budget and Inland Revenue Bill providing for interim sales of silver plate, which I understand the hon. Member wishes to facilitate. The clause shall be put upon the Paper immediately after the Second Reading in order to give publicity to the arrangements.

THE INDORE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that Mr. Kenvey, Agent to the Governor General of India, at Indore, has recently issued a notice that—

> "No Association should be organised within Residency limits without the Agent to the Governor General's permission and approval;"
>
> "The so-called Indore Students' Association is not recognised as a public Association so far as the Residency limits are concerned, though of course there is no objection to private persons meeting and debating as much as they please, provided they do not transgress the law;"
>
> "No official, student, or school-boy connected with the Residency Establishment is permitted to join any Association within the Residency limits which has not been approved by the Agent to the Governor General. And no such official, student, or school-boy may, without special permission, attend the meeting or meetings of any unauthorised Association within Residency limits;"

whether he can state under what authority such notice has been issued; whether there is any precedent for the issue of such a notice; whether the notice has been approved by the Government of India; and whether the Secretary of State will call for a Report on the circumstances leading to the issue of such notice?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has no official information on the subject. The notice appears to be within the ordinary authority of the Agent to the Governor General, and does not seem to the Secretary of State to call for special inquiry.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Has the Agent ordinary authority to interfere with a meeting of native Indians?

The question was not answered.

INDIAN FACTORY LAW.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether children are allowed to work in Indian cotton factories at seven years of age, and to be kept at work for nine hours per day, also whether it is the case that there are no restrictions whatever affecting the employment of young persons over 12 years of age or of women in regard to the number of hours during which they may work; and whether, in view of the fact that the Berlin Labour Conference recommended that children should not be admitted to work in any industry under 12 years of age, and then only for six hours per day till they were 14, that young persons from 14 to 16 years of age should not work more than 10 hours per day, and that women should in no case work more than 11 hours per day, Her Majesty's Government propose to take any steps to bring the Factory Law in India into conformity with the Berlin standard?

***SIR J. GORST**: The existing Factory Law of India is correctly stated in the question. A Bill has been introduced which is not yet passed, raising the age at which children can be employed to 9, and restricting the hours of labour of women to 11. The Secretary of State will send the Resolutions of the Berlin Conference to the Government of India, and will commend them to the careful consideration of that Government, in connection with the proposed amendment of the Factory Law.

MR. MUNDELLA: Will any proposal by the Government of India for the amendment of the Factory Law come before this House before it is adopted by the Council of India?

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; I do not suppose it will be brought before the House.

THE EX-SULTAN ABDULLAH OF PERAK.

MR. FRANCIS STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the highly doubtful character of the evidence on the strength of which the ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak was sentenced in 1876, and to the length to which his term of deportation to the Seychelles Islands has extended, the Colonial Office will consider the desirability of allowing him to return to the Malay Peninsula?

BARON H. DE WORMS: As I stated in answer to a similar question by the hon. Member last July, the Executive Council of the Straits Settlements were fully satisfied of the guilt of the ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak in 1876, and nothing has since occurred to throw any doubt on the justice of the decision then taken that he should be removed to the Seychelles. Her Majesty's Government cannot sanction his return to the Malay Peninsula, and Abdullah declined an offer made last year that he should be allowed to reside in Sarawak, among people of his own race, language, and religion.

THE CRAWFORD CASE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the grave statements in the Papers laid upon the Table as to the effect of the action of the Secretary of State with reference to the action of the Government against the Mamlatdars incriminated in the Crawford Case, he will afford facilities for the discussion of the Motion on the Paper in the event of its not being reached on Tuesday?

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: The Government are quite prepared to discuss the question which the hon. Member is desirous of raising; but it will be impossible for them to afford facilities.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: Is not the right hon. Gentleman aware that an officer of the Government has declared that he had difficulty in expressing his feelings in regard to the breach of faith which has been committed in becoming language; and whether that statement is not sufficiently grave to justify the question being raised here?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am aware that language of that character has been used by an officer who stands high in the service of the Government of India; but if the Government were, considering the limited time at their disposal, to grant time for the consideration of such questions, I am afraid it would necessitate our having two Houses of Commons.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: I wish to give notice that, in consequence of the information I have received from Members on both sides of the House who desire to take part in the Debate upon this question, I shall not bring my Motion on to-morrow evening unless I can do so before 11 o'clock.

THE IMPORT OF SILVER PLATE.

In answer to Mr. KING (Hull, Central), who put a question of which he had given private notice,

***MR. GOSCHEN** said: Directly the Board of Customs learnt, this morning, that certain foreign silver plate imported in baggage before the 30th of April had been considered by their officers to be still liable to duty they issued the following Order:—

> "The Board authorise delivery of plate imported prior to the 1st inst. free of duty, provided it be constructively warehoused. Deposit in the baggage warehouse to be considered a constructive warehousing for this Order. The usual declaration is to be made if the plate is for private use; in that case the assay will not be required."

I may add that the Act requires that such plate should be deposited in a bonded warehouse; and the meaning of the Customs Order is that deposit in the baggage warehouse shall count as warehousing for the purposes of the Act.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to South Indian Railway Purchase Bill, without Amendment.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(No. 231.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(5.18.) MR. H. S. KING (Hull, Central: . . . I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman will think I am very ungrateful, and that he bases his chief claim to our affectionate regard on the reduction he proposes in the Tea Duty. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that "Blessed is he that expects nothing." He has reduced the Tea Duty by 2d. per lb., but I am afraid that although the right hon. Gentleman expressed great concern for the the poor consumer, and virtuously repudiated the middleman, the same original sin lurks in this proposal as in the case of the Spirit Duty. The purchaser of half or a quarter of a pound of tea may derive some good from the reduction; but it is a fleeting and microscopic reduction, inasmuch as the purchaser of a whole chest would only receive 3s. 4d., whereas those in whose interest the reduction is supposed to be made—the poorer classes—who buy their tea by the ounce or half ounce, cannot receive anything unless my right hon. Friend can show some way in which 2d. can be divided by 16. I must here say that I view the proposed remission of the Tea Duty with great concern, because, in the first place, I think that no Chancellor of the Exchequer will ever have the courage to re-impose that duty; and when revenue is sought for in vain from that source the Income Tax collector will once more be called in to make up the amount that may be needed. In the second place, I regard the remission with concern because of the effect it is likely to have on tea planting in India. On this subject I can speak with some knowledge, owing to my connection with that country, and I say that the remission will do no good to the tea planters of India, who are prosecuting an industry in which millions of British capital are invested. It will be no compensation to them if that industry is jeopardised to be told that India will profit by the removal of the duty on silver plate, which I admit is called for by public opinion in India; but I warn my right hon. Friend that it is more than probable that the remission of the Tea Duty will seriously cripple one of the greatest industries of India by enabling the cheap and worthless teas of China to compete with Indian tea in this market in a manner it has hitherto been unable to do. . . .

(6.3.) *MR. BRADLAUGH: . . . The hon. Member for Hull (Mr. King) sneered somewhat at the remission of the Plate Duty, and at the reduction of the Tea Duty. I quite agree with the wish expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, that the reduction of the Tea Duty had been larger, but I fail to comprehend the argument of the hon. Member for Hull, that the reduction of the Tea Duty can be a mischief to the Indian tea trade. I suppose there is some reason in his mind which he did not communicate to the House, but unless there is some reserve on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of which I am ignorant, I understand that the reduction affects equally the tea coming from India and the tea coming from China. I do not quite understand, therefore, how it can be to the injury of the tea merchants or tea cultivators and those they employ, that the duty should be reduced. It is, however, specially with regard to the remission of the Plate Duty, that I rise to say a word, and, apart from the communication made to me, it would have been impossible for me to remain silent when the hon. Member for Hull stated that the public opinion expressed in India for the remission of this Plate Duty had been chiefly bi-metallic opinion. I was present at one meeting, attended by delegates from all parts of India, which did not express the slightest opinion in favour of bi-metallism, which did not discuss it, which I don't think cared much about it, but which certainly made a very strong appeal to the English Government to remove the duty on silver plate, and I put a Motion upon the Paper not merely at the request of those very persons, but also on behalf of a large English Association which is in no sense whatever connected with bi-metallism, but which has for years been agitating for the repeal of the Silver Plate Duty. I do not know that I ought to say anything upon the subject of hall-marking. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will, I suppose, say that another Bill will be introduced to deal specially with the matter of hall-marking. Unless that is so, my thanks to him for repealing the Plate Duty will have to be expressed with some caution. The whole of the silver plate made in India is made of rupee silver, which is of a less standard than the ordinary English silver. I understand from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that that is a point he has considered, and that he intends to make a legislative proposition to the House enabling the Indian silver to be hall-marked with a standard of its own. If so, that standard would have to be the standard of rupee silver, less the necessary reduction in the standard which arises from reducing it in the working-up into the very fine native work which we too seldom see in England. I do not know whether I have any right to infuse my own feeling into the matter, brought home as it was when the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid violent hands on some silver with which I had been temporarily entrusted. There is another point in connection with the hall-marking, which, unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer considers, he will not earn the gratitude of the Indian native population to the extent he otherwise might. The Indian silver work is very fine work, and very easily damaged unless the hall-marking is very carefully applied. I am sure the trade represented by the hon. and gallant Member opposite (Mr. Howard Vincent) will not do anything to injure their Indian competitors. Still, I should like it to be impossible that anything of the kind can happen. Considering the very great and influential pressure which has been put on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I wonder the right hon. Gentleman really did repeal the duty. His action only shows that some of the old views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer still exist in his mind and make him do justice in a matter of this kind. The Budget has been attacked as a twopenny halfpenny Budget. I do not know whether that is a proper conclusion, but I am bound to say that a few twopenny halfpennies are sometimes of serious importance to those who get the benefit of remissions. The remission of the Plate Duty, even if it be a twopenny halfpenny duty, the hon. Member for Hull urges, is a remission which enables a possible development of an artisan trade which is not practised in this country, and which is of such a character that it cannot in any way compete with the trade of this country. While one is not astonished to hear from those Benches some of the old Protectionist doctrines occasionally trotted out, as they are likely to be presently by the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Sheffield, I avow I was rather shocked to hear the hon. Member for Hull urge that injury will be done to the Indian tea trade by the reduction of the Tea Duty by 2d.

*(6.25.) MR. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham): I do not think there is much in the chief objection to the Budget. That objection is that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has tried to remove too many grievances and to conciliate too many interests. It is much better sometimes for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to do a little for a great many interests than to use his surplus in relieving one particular interest. This discussion has wandered over a very wide range of subjects. I should like to say a word about the removal of the duty on silver plate, referred to by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). I am entirely in sympathy with the hon. Member in his remarks on the desirability of doing away with that duty. No doubt the imposition of the duty was looked upon in India as a real grievance. I am somewhat sceptical myself as to the results that will follow its repeal. The principal silver manufactures of India are very delicate works of art, and not useful objects likely to meet any large or general consumption. The great proportion of them are caskets for enclosing addresses for presentation to hon. Members who go out there to court the favour of the natives, and then there are card cases and so

forth. It is extremely improbable that work of this kind will ever be largely consumed in this country, so that I do not think the clients of my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent) need be much alarmed about the repeal of the duty. Something was said about the reduction of the Tea Duty being likely to prejudice Indian planters, and to benefit rather the tea of China. It must be obvious to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), who said he could not understand the complaint, that the reduction of the duty will be much larger proportionately on the coarser teas of China than on the finer teas of India. On the other hand, of course, the cheaper teas are still placed at a disadvantage by a duty which is not levied *ad valorem*, but is a fixed sum for each pound of whatever quality, so that this argument cuts both ways. . . .

*(6.35.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): . . . . For one part of the Budget I have nothing but praise; I refer to the reduction on Indian and Colonial postage. The high rate of postage has been in the past a perfect scandal, and it was quite time a portion of the surplus should be devoted to its reduction. I must congratulate the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Henniker Heaton) on the success of his efforts in this direction, and I must say I was somewhat surprised at the tone of the Postmaster General's remarks at Bradford in reference to the hon. Member in which he spoke of the hon. Member as the "Fly on the Wheel," whose buzzing had become offensive. I should hardly have expected such language towards a supporter of the Government, and I think the right hon. Gentleman would have been wiser to have acknowledged the assistance of the hon. Member for Canterbury in his efforts to induce the Treasury to give way on this point. Many other Post Office reforms are urgently needed. For my part, I think that for the past four or five years the present Treasury has starved the post Office, and many important reforms have been postponed in order that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might realise the surplus Post Office Revenue. The Secretary to the Treasury seems to dissent to that, but he will not deny that there has been a growing surplus derived from this source in the past three years.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Gross Revenue.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: In the net surplus in the last three years. Within four years it has increased £760,000, or at the rate of £190,000 a year. In 1860, after deducting the cost of the Packet Service, there was a surplus Revenue of £440,000; in 1870 of £1,173,000; in 1880 of £2,225,000; in 1890 of £3,500,000. Of course there have been some ups and downs in the intervals, but, looking broadly over the period, that is the rate of progress, and at the present time there is a larger surplus than before. On the Post Office Vote I shall attempt to show the effect of the Treasury screw on necessary and urgent Post Office reforms, but I should hardly be justified in doing that now. For the moment I congratulate the Government on giving up £80,000 for Indian and Colonial postage, and I think they might well have devoted more of their surplus to Post Office reforms. I hope the hon. Member for Canterbury will not be discouraged by the somewhat contemptuous terms in which he was referred to by the Postmaster General from urging still further those reforms in the Post Office which are urgently required. There is no Department of the Public Service where expenditure is more valuable than in the Post Office; it gives immediate facilities to the public, and in the long run is almost certain to result in an increased revenue. All the money expended in this direction yields a good return, and the Post Office stands in quite a different category to all other Services. In reference to the Indian and Colonial postage, I should like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any information to give us as to the disposition of the Indian and Colonial Governments—are they prepared to assist in the new arrangements; will they contribute towards bringing the reduction into effect very shortly?

MR. JACKSON: . . . The hon. Member for Hull and the hon. Member for Oldham both referred to the Tea Duties, the former expressing a doubt as to whether the pocket of the consumer would be in the least benefited, and the latter doubting whether the Chancellor of the

Exchequer would get many thanks for what he has done. As a matter of fact, however, I can assure the hon. Member for Oldham that evidence is accumulating every day at the Treasury that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has secured a great deal of thanks for what he has done in this direction. With regard to the point of the hon. Member for Hull as to the effect on China tea, I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there is no reason to doubt that Indian teas will be able to hold their own, notwithstanding this reduction of duty. . . . . . The right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) has made some rather good-natured remarks with regard to the action of the Treasury in dealing with the Post Office; but I can say most conscientiously that since I have been at the Treasury not only have the Post Office and other Departments not been stinted in any justifiable expenditure, but every application for extension of buildings and acquisition of sites has been met by the Treasury in a most reasonable spirit. I do not mean to say that they have yielded to every application, because I am sure that the Treasury have made the Post Office and every other Department show that the money they asked for was really needed in justice to the Service. . . .

*(8.37.) COMMANDER BETHEL (York, E.R., Holderness): . . . Then it seems to me that my hon. Friends the Members for Central Hull and Poplar were not quite just to the Chancellor of the Exchequer when they said that the effect of the small diminution in the Tea Duty will not be felt by the classes whom it is supposed most to benefit. If the diminution of the tax is small, and if its effect may not be felt immediately, I imagine that in the long run the remission will make a considerable difference to the people. As small increases in the duty on articles of consumption are felt by the consumers, so in the converse way small decreases of duty must be felt by the consumers. I feel that our taxation should rest upon a broader and less contracted basis than that on which it at present rests, but, subject to my views about the disposition of the money which is to be applied to local purposes, and to which I may possibly endeavour to give effect in Committee, I shall certainly support the Budget proposals as embodied in the Bill.

(8.54.). MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): It seems to me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should either have abolished the whole of the Tea Duty or let it entirely alone, for no possible advantage will accrue to the masses from the nibbling policy he has pursued. I rose mainly, however, for the purpose of correcting a statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer respecting the profits of the tea dealers in the East End of London, and on which he founded an argument. On Friday last the right hon. Gentleman amended that statement, but not sufficiently. The blunder in calculation made by the right hon. Gentleman was an extraordinary one, and it was the more inexcusable because, contrary to the usual practice, he made his statement first and sought for evidence to justify it afterwards. The mistake he fell into was only the natural consequence of his course of action.

*MR. GOSCHEN: What action?

MR. PICKERSGILL: The day after the right hon. Gentleman made his statement, on April 21, he sent a Custom House officer to the East End of London post haste to purchase some packets of tea, and the inquiries were conducted with such haste that halfpenny packets of tea were mistaken for penny packets.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I never sent anybody.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Then I and other Members and a large number of people in the country have misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman's statement. I understood the facts to be that after the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his statement on April 21, a Custom House officer was sent to the East End to obtain 24 halfpenny packets of tea, and we were told that in this part of London shopkeepers were selling tea at the rate of 5s. per pound. The right hon. Gentleman will have the opportunity of further correcting his statement, which he now seems anxious to disavow. The statement, however, showed a complete failure to appreciate the conditions of retail trade, if not a strong animus against the small traders themselves. I am very sorry that the poor of the East End are obliged to buy their tea in halfpenny packets, but this is inevitable as long as the large part of the population remains on the verge of starvation, and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer will try to so improve their condition that they will be no longer compelled to make such small purchases, his efforts will be welcomed. In the meantime, I protest against the unfounded and cowardly attacks that are being made upon a body of citizens who, though poor, are as respectable as the right hon. Gentleman himself, and are not only useful but, I believe, necessary members of society. Is it reasonable to expect that a trader who sells his goods in almost infinitesimal parcels should get only the same price as the trader who sells in large quantities? The right hon. Gentleman has ignored the radical distinction between the two classes of trade, and equally has he ignored the conditions under which the trader at the East End of London carries on his business—the grinding rent and the intolerable burden of rates, which in the East End is double that imposed on those in the West End, in such districts as St. George's, Hanover Square, which the right hon. Gentleman represents. The right hon. Gentleman produced an impression that the small traders in the East End of London are making enormous profits, but I, speaking with knowledge on the subject, can say that this class have the greatest difficulty in keeping their heads above water, and few sections of the community are more entitled to public sympathy. In a sense, no doubt, these traders are middle-men, but I do not know that it lies in the mouth of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to level taunts against middle-men. The middle-man who deals in tea is at least as respectable a man as the middle-man who deals in money, and it is hardly fair that men who acquire colossal fortunes by means of one class of operations should be ready to fling stones at those who scrape together a humble livelihood by another class of middle-man operations. The right hon. Gentleman may say he knew nothing of the conditions of the trade; then he had been more prudent had he said nothing about it. Now, I propose to correct the right hon. Gentleman's corrected statement about the profits on the retail sale of tea. In this box I have 24 halfpenny packets of tea, which are open to the inspection of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen. These packets were bought over the counter in the ordinary way of trade in Bethnal Green and the neighbourhood, and I may say they were bought soon after the right hon. Gentleman's original statement, to which I was prepared to offer a contradiction long before he made his correction on Friday. I did not buy these parcels myself, or suggest their purchase. I have a constituent practically interested in the subject, who some years ago was a general trader in the East of London, and his *esprit de corps* seems to have been wounded by the remarks of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he, therefore, procured from 24 shops a sample of tea for a halfpenny, sending his little son, 10 years of age, into shops after nine at night, while he, his father, remained outside, so that it is a perfectly *bonâ fide* transaction, and I can vouch for the integrity of my correspondent. I have had each of these parcels weighed by a practical man, a counterman accustomed to the use of scales, under my immediate supervision, and of these 24 packets 11 weighed, at least, ½ oz. each without the paper; that is, the tea was sold at 1s. 4d. per lb; 11 other parcels weighed 6 drachms each net, and the price, therefore, was 1s. 10d. per lb.; one weighed a little over 5 drachms, equal to 2s. 2d. per lb.; and one weighed ¼ oz, being at the rate of 2s. 8d. per lb. Finally, I had the packets weighed together, and the net weight of the tea was 10¾ oz., so that this is the quantity of tea that is sold in the East End of London in small parcels. In other words, the average price in halfpenny packets is 1s. 6d. per lb. This, I think, contrasts very favourably with the second statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As regards the quality of the tea, I have taken the opinion of an expert, and while, in two or three cases, it is true the parcels contained merely tea dust, and was very bad, in the majority of cases the tea was full leafed and of fair average quality. Now I have discharged the duty I took upon myself. I have no doubt there are general dealers at the East of London who get exorbitant profits out of the poor, and sell adulterated goods, and I should be glad to join with the right hon. Gentleman, or anyone else, in exposing and, if possible, punishing these exceptionally dishonest traders, but, as regards the general body of small traders, I come to the conclusion, after careful observation and inquiry, that there is little reason for complaint. I hope these remarks which I have ventured to make in the House to-night, may be the means of removing, at all events to some extent, the cloud of suspicion and distrust raised around these humble traders by the unfounded—and I am afraid I must say cowardly—attack upon them by a Minister of the Crown.

*(9.35.) MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, East): . . . I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer was wise in taking the duty off silver plate, because these goods come mainly from India, where they are manufactured in large quantities. The duties charged on the importation of our chief manufacturing commodities into India is, comparatively speaking, a light one, and I think, therefore, we owe some return to India for the policy the Government there have pursued. The remission of this duty will not only be a gain to India, but it will encourage the industry of the manufacture of silver goods generally, and probably be the means of making the relationship between the value of gold and silver less marked than at the present time.

(9.38.) MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I propose to confine my remarks to the second portion of the Bill. I think we have some cause for satisfaction with regard to the abolition of the Gold and Silver Plate Duties in knowing that at last the fatal step has been taken. For a large number of years the trade has been interfered with during the month or two preceding the Annual Budget Statement, because those employed in the industry have not known what course the Chancellor of the Exchequer would take. This state of uncertainty has now been put an end to by the action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has been subjected to a good deal of pressure from those connected with the trade, a great many of whom are in favour of the retention of the duty. The right hon. Gentleman has allowed a drawback with regard to silver plate, but he has refused it in regard to gold plate, and from my experience of the trade I can tell him that a large number of small manufacturers and small shopkeepers have been very hard hit by the sudden action which he has taken. The effect of the abolition of the Gold Plate Duty is especially marked in the case of wedding rings, and I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman whether he cannot re-consider his decision and allow a drawback in the case of wedding rings. From the estimates which have been made I believe it would only cost him some £5,000, and while that is an infinitesimal sum to him, it represents a very large sum to the dozen or so of manufacturers doing business mainly in London and Birmingham, upon whom the loss will fall. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether something cannot be done for the wedding ring makers, if for no other class of persons employed in the gold plate trade.

*(9.45.) MR. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N., Lonsdale): As one of those who took action in the matter, I should like to say how grateful I am to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for having listened to the representations made to him on behalf of the lodging-house keepers, who will experience some relief under the provisions of the Bill. Several of the speakers to-night have made reference to the abolition of the duty on silver plate. I may remark, with reference to that, that instances may arise in which hall-marking is not altogether an advantage. I desire to see some relief given in the direction of the import of silver articles from India. I am one of the few Members of the House who really represent India, as I was born there, and I think I can speak on behalf of that country quite as much as some Members can speak on behalf of their particular constituencies. . . .

*(10.25.) MR. GOSCHEN: . . . Then as regards the Tea Duty, some hon. Members say that the remission will only benefit the middlemen, but this suggestion was promptly replied to by other hon. Members, who said that the consumer will benefit, and as far as I can judge, it is certain that a large portion of the benefit consequent on the reduction of the Tea Duty will go to the consumer. . . . I now come to another small item, namely, the colonial postage. There is only

one Member of the House who has raised any objection on that; and there, again, is a matter on which I do not think any reproach can rest on me. [*Interruption from the Irish Members.*] I am referring to the propriety of having dealt with these particular points, and answering an objection which I think I am bound in courtesy to take notice of. In the smaller concessions I have made I have been doing that which I think the public and this House have demanded should be done. Now I come to the Silver Plate Duties. There has been not an absolutely unanimous, but a fairly unanimous feeling that remission was the proper course to take, and, again, the hon. Member acquits me of having frittered in this direction. Well, I am getting on. I say that as to the Silver Plate Duties I had very little choice in the matter. Previous declarations on the part of other Chancellors of the Exchequer, and the recommendations of Select Committees and Commissions, imposed this upon me as a step which ought to be taken. . . . . There remain only the Tea Duty and the House Duty as the two large concessions that have been made; and whatever magnificent notions hon. Members may have as to the preparation of Budgets, I think that a remission of £1,500,000 on one particular article is not a small remission. An hon. Member has said we had better have reduced the duty by one-half, as it would then have been easier to have abolished it altogether; but the Government are not prepared to pave the way for the abolition of the Tea Duty. . . . . The hon. Member for Finsbury spoke of the grievance under which wedding-ring manufacturers suffer through receiving no drawback. Well, it is impossible to reduce duties without involving hardship in some quarters. Those who have laid in a considerable stock of currants, for instance, will lose; also those who have laid in a large stock of tea. I have been asked not to allow the proposal with respect to currants to come into operation before the 1st of October; but the result of inquiries in both the wholesale and retail dried fruit trade has convinced me that more harm than good will come from the concession, and I cannot, therefore, agree to postponing the operation of the Bill until that date. In the same way as in the currant trade the manufacturers of wedding rings will have a certain loss. The case is certainly hard on them, because I understand their profits are extremely small, and the duty is heavy as compared with their profits; but without opening the whole question of drawback, we were unable to make the concession which the hon. Member demands. If such a concession were made to the manufacturers, it would immediately be claimed by the retailers, and I have had communications from pawnbrokers also on the subject. It is difficult to find out what is a new wedding ring. Old ones are burnished up, I understand, so as to appear new; and on looking at the matter broadly, though anxious to find some means of meeting the grievance complained of by the hon. Member, I have been unable to find such means. Then the hon. Member for Bethnal Green made what his constituents will characterise as a "savage attack on the Chancellor of the Exchequer" with regard to the unfortunate mistake as to the question of tea, for which I expressed my regret in the House. I think he exaggerated the matter extremely when he wished to represent me as anxious to make a cowardly attack on the grocers. Why such an attack should be "cowardly" I do not know, because they are an extremely formidable body for any single person to attack. I do not wish to bring forward any evidence to modify the statement of regret I then made, and I shall not attempt to deal with the views of the hon. Member. I can only say, as I am bound to say, that when I spoke of the prices paid for tea in many villages I spoke with actual knowledge, which has since been confirmed, and which hon. Members have told me is borne out by their own experience. But I wish hon. Members to dismiss from their minds any idea that I wanted to make an attack upon grocers, nor did I wish to attack any middlemen in particular. I was anxious that the 2d. should not be lost to the consumer, and I believe it is the case that he is already in many parts of the country deriving advantage from the reduction. More than that, I believe that in many cases what will happen has been to some extent already anticipated, namely, that the reduction in price has been greater than the reduction of duty. The trade, seeing that confidence has been restored, have found it is possible to make a larger reduction than 2d. in the pound. . . .

Tuesday, May 6, 1890.

THE INDIA COUNCIL BILL.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury state at what time the Second Reading of the India Council Bill be taken? Will it be taken before Whitsuntide?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): It is impossible for me to say at the present moment when the Bill will be taken. I will endeavour to give ample notice, and I may assure the hon. Member that, at all events, a few days' notice will be given.

Thursday, May 8, 1890.

POSTAGE RATES TO INDIA AND THE COLONIES.

MR. SUMMERS (*Huddersfield*): I beg to ask the Postmaster General what would be the estimated additional loss to the Revenue of the reduction of the postage rates to India and the British Colonies from 5d. and 6d. to 1d. instead of 2½d., as proposed by him?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): The loss to the Imperial Revenue by reducing the postage of letters to India and the Colonies to 1d. instead of 2½d., as proposed, is estimated at £180,000 a year; and that loss, I may add, would be in addition to the loss which is at present sustained by the expenditure on Ocean Mail Services being very largely in excess of the postage rates charged to the public.

*MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Does the right hon. Gentleman include in that £180,000 a year the loss on carrying letters to Canada?

*MR. RAIKES: Yes; the Estimate covers the whole of the colonies.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): Does the right hon. Gentleman take into account any possible extension of the number of letters?

*MR. RAIKES: I cannot answer that question.

*MR. CHILDERS: Can the right hon. Gentleman give a Return showing how the reduction to 1d. would affect the different colonies and dependencies?

*MR. RAIKES: All I can say is that the sum I have given would cover the estimated loss, including all the colonies.

MR. SUMMERS: Is the £180,000 in addition to the loss now sustained in connection with the Postal Service?

*MR. RAIKES: It is estimated that the present loss upon the Colonial Postal Service amounts to £254,000 a year, or rather more than £250,000, and the reduction to 1d. would increase that loss by £180,000 a year more.

THE MAHARANI OF REWAH.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has yet received the Memorial of H.H. the Barhi Chandalin, Maharani of Rewah, and if he can state its prayer; whether any reply has been sent thereto, and to what effect; and whether he will lay the Papers relating thereto upon the Table of this House?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No, Sir; no Memorial from the Maharani of Rewah has been transmitted from the Government of India to the Secretary of State.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a Memorial, dated 23rd January, 1890, has been reported by the Government of India as having been received by them?

*SIR J. GORST: Yes, Sir; I told the hon. Gentleman that about two months ago.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to give notice that, in consequence of the answer of the Under Secretary of State, unless this Memorial, a copy of which I hold in my hand, comes very soon to the Secretary of State, I shall avail myself of the opportunity of bringing the matter before the House.

LORD REAY.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the attention of the Secretary of State has been called to the following statement which appeared in the *Times* of the 21st April:—

> "On Lord Reay's departure from Bombay, at the moment of embarkation, the Municipal Council presented a farewell address. His Lordship, in replying, said that during his five years period of office his object had been to carry out strictly the principle of Her Majesty's Proclamation, which was the Magna Charta of the humblest labourer no less than the noblest Chief in the land, and that when what he considered a grave departure from those principles was ordered from England he at once tendered his resignation;"

and whether Lord Reay did, in fact, tender his resignation; and, if so, why such resignation was not accepted?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has seen the statement in the *Times*, but cannot believe that Lord Reay's speech has been accurately reported, as Lord Reay, whatever may have been his intentions, did not, in fact, tender his resignation.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Has not a Despatch reached the Secretary of State in connection with Lord Reay's action concerning the Mamlatdars; and, if so, why has it not been included in the Papers laid before the House?

*SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; no Despatch which could be construed into a tender of resignation on the part of Lord Reay has reached the Secretary of State.

DOCK AT GIBRALTAR AND BOMBAY.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can state what progress is being made in the arrangements for the construction of the dry docks at Gibraltar and Bombay?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): A small Committee are now considering various questions in connection with the construction of a dock at Gibraltar, and I hope that before the close of the financial year the work may be in hand. The question of the construction of a dock at Bombay out of Imperial funds has been postponed for the present, owing to the extraordinary demands upon the Exchequer in respect of other works of urgent importance. I am, however, glad to add that a dock is in course of construction by the Port Trust, which will be 500ft. in length and capable of accommodating any but the largest ironclads.

ADMIRAL MAYNE: I beg to give notice that when the Admiralty Vote comes on I will raise the question whether or not the Admiralty is responsible for providing adequate dock accommodation.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—(BILL 231.)

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I rise to move the Amendment of which I have given notice, and I have to say a word in explanation of the form it takes. The Division which I propose to take will necessarily be on this formal Amendment, substituting the word "ninety" for "ninety-one;" the effect of which, of course, would be that the Tea Duty would come to an end in the month of August in this year, instead of August of next year. I think that every year a Division should be taken upon the question whether tea is a proper commodity for taxation or not. If hon. Members would only vote as Members of the different Parties have spoken out of doors, I have no doubt whatever I should carry my Amendment. Of course, the question is an old one, and it is associated with some of the most memorable names we have known in this House. I need scarcely refer to the interest taken in the question of a free breakfast table, of which this subject is a part, by the late Mr. John Bright, whose memory is fragrant to every one of us, however much we may have differed with him in some of his opinions. For years he laboured on this question. Recently it has been taken up not by one great Party in the State, but by two great Parties respected on both sides of the House. The Liberal Federation in Manchester unanimously passed a resolution affirming that the duty should be taken off tea. As far as I know there was no opposition whatever. Several leaders of the Liberal Party have taken their places on the platform of this Federation at their meetings, and the resolution has been prepared with great deliberation by the Council of the Federation. Not only was that the case, but in the Conservative meetings at Nottingham, as is very well known, there was a strong desire to have a resolution on this subject brought forward and passed. Why the rank and file of the Party were prevented from bringing it forward by their leader I do not know; at any rate it is certain they were all strongly in favour of it. We are told we ought to be content because the Tea Duty has been reduced. But, as the hon. Member for Oldham said the other day, it is extremely problematical whether the small consumer will ever receive the benefit of the reduction. Certainly we ought to be satisfied upon that point. The right hon. Gentleman has said that already the price of tea is being brought down. Yes, we see advertisements everywhere of enterprising grocers who are advertising their tea at 2d. per lb. less. But that is for the people who buy their tea by the pound; it is certainly not for the poor, who buy their tea in small packets, such as the right hon. Gentleman himself described in his speech. I know from what I have heard from merchants doing a large business that they expect to get a large part of the reduction into their own pockets, and certainly very little of it will reach the poorer classes. The right hon. Gentleman made a correction in his statement as to the small packets the other day. He told us that, owing to the hurried manner in which the information had been prepared for him, his informants had fallen into an error, and that we ought to reduce by half the prices which he gave. But that makes in my favour. Taking the price that still remains there is a larger percentage of duty on the tea as sold to the poor. In making the correction, he told us that tea which was sold in penny packets to the poor, when properly reckoned out, came to 1s. 4¼d. per lb., and that the price would run up from 1s. 4¼d. to 1s. 11½d. It is evident, taking the duty at 4d., that the duty on tea to the poor ranges from 20 to 26 per cent., according to the price of tea. The merchants and those concerned must get their profit out of the Customs Duty, and also out of the price they pay for the tea without the duty Therefore, it is reckoned by some that the duty, instead of being 8d. was 6d., and, if that were true, it may be said the duty instead of being 4d. would be 6d. I believe the 4d. duty will still cost the consumer 4d., 5d., or 6d. The right hon. Gentleman, in reply to some remarks of mine, said my argument would go to this point, that the consumer would gain very little indeed even if the duty were taken off altogether. I do not quite see that. It is so much cheaper to collect 6d. than 3d.; but, besides that, if you make the commodity free of duty altogether, you save a considerable amount in Custom House officers, and bonded warehouses, and interest on money, and a variety of channels of expenditure. Therefore, it is quite clear that if the whole of this reduction will not go to the consumer, he would be more benefited if the whole amount were taken off, than when you merely take off a small amount. An indirect tax costs a great deal more in collection from the people who consume the commodities than it gives to the Government who collects the tax. This may be tolerable, and is tolerable with regard to luxuries, but I say it is utterly intolerable, when we have to do with the necessaries of life. However, the more substantial issue which I raise on this occasion is that the tax on tea is a tax on a very large number of people indeed; it is a tax on the narrow income which is absolutely essential to live in peace and comfort. The right hon. Gentleman did not hesitate to describe afresh the duty on tea as a Poll Tax, if it were taken in this sense. It is a tax which nearly every member of the community is called upon to pay. Well, Sir, that is precisely what I object to. The right hon. Gentleman truly said that a very large question is opened up. "I desire to protest" he went on to say,

> "Against the view that this tax ought to be swept away, because it rests, to a certain extent, on the working classes and upon those who are in straitened circumstances."

I desire to note these words—"those who are in straitened circumstances.'

Yes, the sort of straitened circumstances in which a considerable number of our population are found are described in the Report of the Committee of the other House on the subject of sweating. And those who read that Report and the description of misery which it gives of many of the consumers of tea will be able to give an interpretation of the phrase "straitened circumstances." But there is another thing that the Government can do, and that is to take the taxes off all necessaries of life. I think the very least the Government can do is to make life easier for the poor. It may be answered that there is not the money to do this. That may be; but a great deal too much is spent. All we ask is that the burden shall be taken off the necessaries of life and put on property and the accumulated wealth of the country. I hold that the minimum of income necessary for subsistence in peace and comfort ought to go untaxed altogether. That is the main reason why I urge that this duty on tea should be taken off. If I err in this I err in very good company. The right hon Gentleman has, I am sure, great respect for the authority of John Stuart Mill, and I call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the second volume of his work on taxation. In that work he refers in no critical spirit to the proposals with reference to a graduated Income Tax, and suggests that the tax should fall on the richer classes more heavily in proportion to the amount of wealth. It is also suggested that incomes not exceeding £50 should not be taxed at all, either directly or by taxes on the necessaries of life, and that in the case of the small incomes earned by labouring families, the Government ought not to be a party to making them smaller. I think I have the authority of John Stuart Mill for this argument; but I have also another authority, and a more modern one, for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who last night seems to have bidden a final adieu to the Liberal Party, but who was formerly one of the pioneers of Liberal progress, speaking in Birmingham on the 29th January, 1885, used words, according to the authorised edition of his speech, to the effect that a certain income was necessary for subsistence, and that it ought not to be heavily taxed, but that the burden of taxation ought to fall on incomes above that amount.. Now, what did he mean at that time by heavy taxation on a minimum of income? It is evident that he included the Tea Duty in his observations, for a little further on he said that if Parliament would only support the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and would give him leave to equalise the duties on land and on personal property, he would soon impose a higher tax upon incomes exceeding a certain amount, and Mr. Childers would be able at once to remedy the injustice and to give a free breakfast table the next day, as well as enable people to put double and treble the quantity of currants and raisins usually put in the Christmas pudding. I think, therefore, I have the authority of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham on my side. I cannot help thinking that the arguments about taxation and representation are often used in a very fallacious way and in a manner entirely inconsistent with the original circumstances to which they were applied. If I mistake not, the principle was first applied on the occasion of the attempt of the Imperial Parliament to lay a tax on the colonies in America. It was always intended that colonies which had no representation in the Imperial Parliament should not be taxed by the Parliament, and I do not think that the principle was applied in any other way at that time. The question was the relation of communities to the Imperial Parliament, and I do not think the right hon. Gentleman can fairly press arguments in favour of the Tea Tax on that principle. When a child is born into this country his destiny is bound up with it. If the country prospers, he also prospers; and if the country suffers, he is the poorer for it and suffers accordingly; and that is the practical bond of citizenship which unites all classes. It is said that the poor have votes as well as the rich, and that if they have nothing to pay for expensive wars they will be ready to hurry us into war regardless of the consequences; and therefore it is necessary to tax the tea in order to keep them from rushing into war. But who suffers most from the extravagance and follies of war? It is not the rich. The rich man may occasionally have to put down a carriage or a horse, or to spend less on hunting and luxuries of that kind, but he never suffers in his breakfast or dinner table. He always has enough to eat and drink, and the evils of war fall by the natural process of gravitation upon the poor. It is always the poor who have to put up with the ultimate consequences of misgovernment, and they are learning that lesson now. We are told that in times past when they were not properly instructed they howled for war. But they are learning better than that now; and it is to instruction that we may look for them to gain political wisdom. We are told that in the days of the Crimean War large numbers of the working classes were bitterly bent on carrying on the war. The Tea Tax at the time was increased from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. I do not think that the extra 3d. had any effect on the opinion of the working classes. It is not to the increase of taxation, but rather to the extension of schools like the Board Schools, to the exercise of the franchise, and to the advance of public enlightenment on political matters that we may look for the extension of political wisdom. I contend that this Tea Tax is a shameful remnant of the old times. It is a relic of the mischievous and wicked system of taxing the necessaries of life—necessaries which ought to go untaxed. I earnestly appeal to my hon. Friends to vote against this Tea Tax, and in so doing I assure them they are carrying out Liberal principles. I also appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite to exhibit for once freedom and independence, and to support principles of which, I am sure, they are in favour.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 23, to leave out the word "ninety-one," and insert the word "ninety."—(*Mr. Picton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'ninety-one' stand part of the Clause."

*(5.27.) MR. GOSCHEN: I trust that the hon. Member will not consider me to be discourteous if I refrain from entering at any length into an examination of the arguments which he has adduced. I have already endeavoured to reply to the hon. Member, who seemingly is not satisfied with it. I think that the arguments for and against are well-known on both sides; and as I have not been moved by what the hon. Member has just said, while the hon. Member remains equally unmoved by the arguments I employed the other day, I hold that no useful purpose is to be served by delaying the decision of the House upon the point.

(5.29.) MR. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.): We have no right to expect that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will accept the advice tendered him by the hon. Member for Leicester; but I think that nobody knows better than the right hon. Gentleman that if the duty on tea were taken off there would be a much larger consumption, and that it would be to the benefit of the trade of the country. I think that if my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester will only in the future be as persevering in this matter as he has been in the past, he will be successful in securing the end he desires to attain. It would be pleasant to feel that the poor people get their tea without duty, and it would be equally satisfactory to know that, as this country has compelled the people of India to take everything we produce free of duty, we should take their tea free of duty in return. At present we take plenty of tea from India, and the carrying out of this suggestion would tend to stimulate commerce.

(5.30.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do not rise to contest the question of the Tea Tax. I merely rise to say that, in supporting the Amendment of my hon. Friend, I do it because I regard indirect taxation as unfair upon the poor as against the rich, and I wish to see everybody contribute a fair share towards the burdens of the country. So far as I am concerned, I shall always vote for the abolition of indirect taxation.

(5.30.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 228; Noes 163.—(Div. List, No. 75.)

(5.45.) MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg leave to move, after "tea," in line 24, to insert "valued over one shilling." Tea is sold at various prices in this City, from 2d. up to 2s. or 3s. per lb., and I have seen samples sold wholesale at as high a price as 6s. per lb. As I understand the proposals of the Government, a rich man who buys tea retail, possibly, at 7s. 6d. per lb., will pay the same amount of taxation on that tea as the poor man who buys his tea at 2d. or 3d. per lb. The

Amendment I propose may be regarded as against the interests of Ireland, because in Ireland they drink the best tea. Those who would chiefly benefit from the Amendment would be the people of London, who, I understand, drink the worst tea in the world. If a person buys tea which, but for the tax, would be sold at 2d. per lb., he will have to pay a 4d. tax on that tea. Possibly another year, if not now, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be able to consider the proposal. I think the people of London ought to take up this question, and get their Members to press it on the attention of the Government. Personally, I am not interested in the question, because I drink no tea; but I think if you are going to make reductions in the Tea Duty, you should make them in such a manner that the poor man will get something out of them. I would suggest to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he should re-impose the duty of 6d. on highly-priced teas, and reduce it on the cheaper teas.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 24, after the word "tea," to insert the words "valued over one shilling."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(5.50.) MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member raises a very large question, because the principle underlying his Amendment would apply practically to all the Customs Duties quite as much to the duty on tea. It would apply to coffee, fruit, wine, and tobacco. I remember when I sought to reduce the duty on cheap classes of wine, the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) opposed my proposal on the ground that the return to an *ad valorem* system would raise all kinds of difficulties. I would point out that the cases in which tea is sold at 6s. per lb. are very exceptional.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I can give you a sample of the tea now.

MR. GOSCHEN: I think the difficulties in the way of adopting the *ad valorem* system in regard to tea are too great to be overcome.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I proposed the Amendment in the interests of the poor; and if it does not meet with any support, I have no option but to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(5.53.) MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name, namely, in line 24 to leave out "pound," and insert "chest of one hundred pounds." My object is not so much to obtain a reduction of the duty on tea as to abolish it altogether.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that we already have had a Division on the abolition of the Tea Duty; and if the hon. Member's motive now is to abolish the Tea Duty, he cannot raise that question again, nor would it do otherwise than by abusing the powers of the Committee to propose to reduce the duty to an infinitesimal amount.

MR. BLANE: My point is that the tax bears unequally on the poor as compared with the rich. In the City of London a poor workwoman in her garret possibly pays as much of this tax as the Duke of Bedford, who draws £250,000 or more from his property in the Metropolis. I contend that the taxation should be placed on those who are best able to bear it. In this instance it is placed on those who are least able to bear it. In many families the 6d. per lb. on tea amounts to 26s. a year, and, in some cases, to 30s. a year.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 24, to leave out the word "pound" and insert the words "chest of one hundred pounds."—(*Mr. Blane.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'pound' stand part of the Clause."

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I think we ought to have some answer from the right hon. Gentleman. My hon. Friend, in bringing this question forward, is trying to do his best for the working classes, not only of our country, but of this country; and I think the right hon. Gentleman, as a salaried Minister of the Crown, would do well to make some reply to his proposal.

*(5.59.) MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member proposes to reduce the duty from 4d. per lb. to 4d. per 100 lbs. The proposition is nearly identical with that made by the hon. Member for Leicester, and I certainly thought, under these

circumstances, I was not wanting in courtesy in making no reply.

*(6.0.) MR. S. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I appeal to my hon. Friend not to press his Amendment. I, for one, would vote against it, because the effect of it would be absurd.

MR. BLANE: In consequence of the appeal made to me I will not press the Amendment to a Division. I merely moved it in order to elicit an expression of opinion from the Government.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 10.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The duty on tea is a matter in which there is very little interest felt in Ireland, although, I think, the remission is one of which the Irish people will get their full share. I would point out with regard to the remission of duty on gold and silver plate the amount raised is £90,020 in England, while in Scotland it is only £312, and in Ireland £34; consequently the remission will be of no benefit to Ireland, and of very little to Scotland.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I would point to the House that this is one of the few taxes on luxuries, and, as such, I think it might very well have been left to itself; but as the Government propose to remit the tax, and as it will help to further Free Trade between this country and India, I shall not oppose that remission. At the same time, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to tell the House what he proposes to do with regard to hall-marking. We should be glad to know where the standard mark is to be applied, and under what circumstances; whether, having applied it in India, the silver wares of that country are to be imported free into this country without the necessity of any hall-marking when they get here? The junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) has taken great interest in this matter, but I do not see him in his place at the present moment. He has stated that the silver wares of India are of a very fine character and very expensive. With regard to the latter part of that statement I hope the proof will go the other way. For my part, I am inclined to think that, although they are undoubtedly of a very fine character, they are extremely cheap, and if Free Trade can be made to prevail between this country and India a very large trade will result. At the same time, the hon. Member for Northampton is quite right in saying that these articles are of a very delicate character—so delicate, indeed, that in most cases, it would be impossible to impress upon them any hall-mark without injury. The consequence will be that, supposing them to have been marked in India, if they are to be submitted to the tender mercies of the hall-markers of this country it will be impossible to continue their free importation. Therefore, I think that, inasmuch as I can find nothing in this Bill on the subject of hall-marking, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to tell us what are his proposals with regard to hall-marking. I may add that I confine my desire for information principally to the case of India. I should like him to inform the Committee whether, in case these delicate wares are marked by the Indian Authorities, he will arrange that they shall not be interfered with by the Goldsmiths' Company or by any other hall-marking authority in England. What I want to know is why this hall-marking should not be altogether——

THE CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. Member that the Committee is discussing the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, and that there is no mention in it of the hall-marking of silver in its provisions. Therefore, to discuss that question is entirely irregular.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Of course, Sir, I bow to your ruling; and I will conclude by saying I am much against this clause, unless arrangements are made the result of which would be that the operation of the clause would lead to Free Trade in silver.

*MR. GOSCHEN: In reply to the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), and the hon. Baronet the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell), I have to say it is not the intention of the Government to propose any measure for the abolition of compulsory hall-marking; but I may state that we are in communication with the Government of India, and we hope to be able to make successful arrangements with regard to the hall-marking of Indian plate. We know that it would be unsatisfactory to India if we were simply to abolish the Plate Duties without being able to amend the present law with regard to the admission of goods from India. If assay offices should be established in India, under the auspices of the Indian Government, we should be perfectly satisfied, and should not regard it as necessary that the hall-marking should be repeated here. I am just informed by my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for India that the establishment of an assay office in India is under consideration, and that, in fact, it is proposed that an assay office should be established there. That being the case, I trust the hon. Gentleman will be satisfied.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I cannot say that I am entirely satisfied, because I have gathered from what I know of the Government of India that there would be great difficulty in establishing assay offices there. It may be that it is considered the game is not worth the candle.

***MR. CHILDERS** (Edinburgh, S.): I am very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the proposal he has made on this subject, but I should like to ask him a practical question, which is this: We understand that after the present time no duty will be payable on imported silver, but I want to know whether the right hon. Gentleman proposes in any sense to retain imported silver under the charge of the Government?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: I think that the matter must remain very much as it is as long as compulsory hall-marking is continued; but the matter is under consideration.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 11.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I wish to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what interpretation is to be put upon the wording of this clause; whether, for instance, it is intended that goods in the care of a traveller should be treated as goods in stock; also whether goods sent for exhibition, or old goods which are taken back unsold, are to be treated in the same manner and are to receive drawback?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: Travellers' stock not having passed from the manufacturer to the customer, I should presume, would be still regarded as manufacturers' stock, but in that case it must come back from the custody of the traveller into the manufacturers' hands, when it would be entitled to drawback.

MR. MALLOCK (Torquay): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether a similar drawback to that which is to be allowed in silver will be allowed on silver plated with gold?

***MR. GOSCHEN**: Silver has always been put upon a different footing, in some respects, to gold. As I have already explained, wedding rings, which form one of the principal items in the gold trade, have never been entitled to drawback in exportation, as is now proposed with regard to silver plate. There may be some hardship in certain cases, but, as in the case of the Tea Duty and the duty on currants, it is impossible to avoid some hardship being entailed on those engaged in the trade.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I trust the right hon. Gentleman will take this subject into further consideration, and that, if he finds it possible, he will make some arrangement that would give satisfaction to those engaged in the trade, as it is a matter of great importance to a large number of them.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 12.

***MR. H. J. WILSON**: Before moving the longer Amendment which stands in my name, I wish to direct attention to the Amendment of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has given notice, and to point out that it would occasion serious difficulty by requiring that each article should be weighed. There are some stocks containing as many as 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 articles, most of them of small weight; and it would be a source of great trouble if the trade were compelled to get the Excise officers to attend at their place of business, and weigh each of those articles before they could be disposed of. I move, therefore, to leave out the word "each," and insert the word "the," in line 7, which would leave it open to them to arrange such a classification of the articles to be dealt with as would be found reasonable.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 7, to leave out the word "each," in order to insert the word "the."—(*Mr. H. J. Wilson.*)

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I cannot see the necessity of omitting the word referred to in the hon. Gentleman's Amendment. We have already, in concert with those engaged in the trade, endeavoured to arrange a limit which I believe will meet the case.

MR. H. J. WILSON: I would point out that the manufacturers complain that it is chiefly the views of the shopkeepers that have been met, and that the views of the manufacturers have not been dealt with at all. I believe the hon. Gentleman has been in communication with a committee of the trade, but the committee only contain the names of two manufacturers, only one of whom manufactures for sale, the other manufacturing entirely for his own purposes, the rest being shopkeepers. The manufacturers in Birmingham say that this proposal would be exceedingly oppressive.

*MR. GOSCHEN: It is impossible for the Government to accept the hon. Gentleman's Amendment without first knowing the full effect it would have, and, in order to do this, they must consult the officers to whom these matters are entrusted. If the hon. Member will postpone his question to the Report stage, I will, in the meantime, make inquiry with a view of ascertaining whether anything is necessary to be done.

MR. H. J. WILSON: I thank the right hon. Gentleman, and, under the circumstances, will not press my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. H. J. WILSON: I now move my Amendment, in line 8, to leave out the words "and the place where this is deposited." But I would point out that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has also given notice of two Amendments, one of which proposes to leave out the words, "the place," while the other proposes to omit the word "deposited." Those engaged in the trade say it is impossible to know where articles are deposited when they are going about the country.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member accept the words put upon the Paper by the Chancellor of the Exchequer?

MR. H. J. WILSON: Yes.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I think the hon. Gentleman will find that they quite meet his objection.

Amendment proposed, in line 8, to leave out the words "the place" and the word "deposited,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,*)—Agreed to.

(7.48.) MR. H. J. WILSON: The next Amendment on the same clause, of which I have given notice, has reference to exportation. I use the word "selling" instead of "exporting," and I have taken the word from the sub-section as it stands in the Bill. There is a feeling that the clause of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will cause the greatest difficulty to the trade. As I understand the operation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's clause, it is that where the manufacturer or wholesale dealer is desiring to sell he has continually to give notice to the Revenue officers of that desire, and those officers would be continually coming to his place of business. What I aim at is to get over a difficulty of that kind, by providing that it should be arranged for the officers to go to the warehouses of the dealers, or to the works of the manufacturers, and there mark the plate, showing that it had been weighed and passed. That having been done, the plate should be at once liberated. An enormous amount of the time of the manufacturers and of the officers would thus be saved. I have letters from 95 per cent. of the trade urging this matter very strongly indeed. The method I propose would be a great convenience to the traders. It is said that my plan does not provide adequate guarantee against the fraud of sending in old plate. I have not had time to go into that subject, but I should have thought the ingenuity of the trade and of the officers would have been sufficient to devise some means of protection.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, after line 17, to insert the words—

"(2.) Provided that if any such person shall be desirous of selling any article of plate of silver belonging to him in respect of which an allowance might be claimed, without losing the right to the allowance he may give to the proper officer of excise twenty-four hours previous notice in writing, setting forth the particulars of, and the weight of silver in, *the article to be sold*, and such *officer shall* cause a distinctive mark to be engraved on such article in his presence; and a certificate from such officer of the correctness of the particulars and weight and of due marking sent to the Commissionners shall have the same effect as if an account of such article as forming part of the stock of the person had been taken for the purpose of the allowance under this Act."—(*Mr. Henry J. Wilson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(7.55.) MR. GOSCHEN: There is no limit of weight in the hon. Member's Amendment, and that makes it impossible for me to accept it in the form in which it is put. But the clause has been framed, to a great extent, to meet the views of the hon. Member. It would be quite impossible to apply the method he proposes to numerous small articles in the trade. Of course, the Officers of Inland Revenue will be prepared to consult with representatives of the trade, the only desire being to meet their convenience.

(7.57.) MR. H. J. WILSON: I quite recognise the desire of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to meet the point, but I do not fully understand what is meant by the limit of weight. As I pointed out, the officers, under the clause, would be constantly going to and from the business places.

(7.58.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): The aim of the hon. Gentleman is to prevent giving unnecessary trouble to the manufacturers, and to the officers of the Crown, and my hon. Friend being an eminently practical man in this matter, I should have thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have seen a way to meet the convenience of the manufacturers and the officers.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The officers of Inland Revenue are in favour of the plan I propose, and, as the hon. Gentleman knows, we must, in these matters, be guided to a great extent by the officers of the Department.

Question put, and negatived.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the clause, to add the words—

"(3.) Provided also, that if any such person shall sell to a person, not being a licensed dealer in plate, any article of plate, or any combination of articles usually sold in a set, or any number of knives, or forks, or spoons, not less than a dozen at one time, and such article, or combination of articles, or knives, or forks, or spoons contain a weight or aggregate weight of silver not less than five ounces, he may, before delivery of the article or articles sold, give to the proper officer of Inland Revenue, notice in writing, setting forth the particulars of and the weight of silver in such article or articles, and his desire that an account of the same should be taken by such officer, so that delivery may not be unduly delayed, and a certificate from such officer of the correctness of the particulars and weight, and of the fact of sale sent to the Commissioners shall have the same effect as if an account of such article or articles, as forming part of the stock of the person, had been taken for the purpose of the allowance under this Act."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. H. J. WILSON: I beg to move to omit from the Amendment the words "not being a licensed dealer in plate." I do not understand how, with those words in the amendment, it will be possible for a manufacturer to get rid of his stock.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 1, after the second word "person," to leave out the words not being a licensed dealer in plate."—(*Mr. Henry J. Wilson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. MUNDELLA: I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will see his way to accept this Amendment, because the manufacturer sells to licensed dealers and not to private persons who have no licence.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I understand that if the words are omitted it will be possible for the duty to be paid twice over by different persons. The whole of this provision applies to intermediates. The moment the interval is over the business will go on in the ordinary way.

MR. H. J. WILSON: How long is the interval to be? The last day mentioned in the Bill is September. Already trade is nearly paralysed, and people do not know how to get rid of their stock.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The amount is to be paid in September, but practically everything is to be arranged in June. It is evident that in all alterations of duty a certain amount of vexation must be caused in all trades. I think this trade has been extremely fortunate in obtaining a drawback; although, here and there, there may be cases of hardship, I think the hon. Member will see that it is scarcely well to push this matter too far.

MR. H. J. WILSON: The interests of a great number of people are deeply concerned in this matter. I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the manufacturers cannot part with their stock to the licensed traders until the end of June.

*MR. GOSCHEN: No; June is the last date. The whole thing must be arranged by June. I may say we have been in communication with a large number of persons in the trade, and have endeavoured to make arrangements which will suit the convenience of the trade. We are certainly under the impression that the arrangements we have made will be satisfactory.

MR. H. J. WILSON: I believe the right hon. Gentleman has not been in communication with a single manufacturer in the town of Sheffield, which is a very important centre of the plate trade.

(8.7.) The Committee divided—Ayes 140; Noes 94.—(Div. List, No. 77.)

Words added.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 14.

(8.19.) MR. H. J. WILSON: I have given notice of an Amendment to leave out Sub-section 1., but if that cannot be accepted I want to move to leave out in line 9, page 6, "payment of the allowances made," for the purpose of substituting the words "certificate is granted." Shall I, Mr. Courtney, move the omission of the sub-section first or the Amendment?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member should move the Amendment first.

MR. H. J. WILSON: Then I move the omission of the words I have mentioned. I can hardly believe that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended what the clause says. I do not know why he should desire the power of search after the Excise officer is satisfied and has given a certificate. It seems hard to expose the manufacturers and dealers to this power of search by carrying it over until the payment of the allowances.

Amendment moved, in page 6, line 9, to leave out the words "payment of the allowance is made," in order to insert the words "certificate is granted."—(*Mr. Henry J. Wilson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

*(8.21.) MR. GOSCHEN: I do not see why an officer should waste his time in making the search after payment is made and the whole matter is arranged. It does not seem to me that there need be any fear of these visits being paid. However, I do not think the Amendment can do any harm, and I, therefore, consent to it. Of course if, later on, it should seem to those familiar with these operations that the Amendment is one that should not be retained the matter will have to be re-considered on Report.

(8.21.) MR. MUNDELLA: If the right hon. Gentleman can facilitate the settlement of this matter in any way by introducing an Amendment on Report I hope he will do so.

(8.21.) MR. H. J. WILSON: If the right hon. Gentleman will introduce an Amendment on Report I will withdraw my proposal.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 15 and 16 agreed to.

Clause 17.

(8.25.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: What is the class of the articles which are liable to assay? Jewellery, I understand, is not liable; and what I want to know is whether silver articles are liable to be pulled to pieces and assayed before they can be brought into the country?

MR. JACKSON: This is merely a formal clause.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I know it is formal; but I think I am entitled to ask for an explanation of the point to which I have referred.

*(8.26.) MR. GOSCHEN: What is reserved here is not the power to assay, but freedom from assay. There is no change in the law.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: May we take it that jewellery, as distinguished from plate, is free from assay, and that silver jewellery is as free as gold jewellery?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member must not take for granted anything more than is in the clause. I might only be misleading him if I were to give him a specific answer to his question. The clause cannot do any harm as it is, seeing that it only maintains an existing principle.

(8.27.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I look upon the clause as unfortunate, as we shall not have free trade. We shall sacrifice revenue, but not the interests of the monopolists.

MR. BLANE: The clause will have a wide application, as it will cover any misdemeanour or felony which may have been committed—and we must remember the bearing of this upon anyone aiding or assisting the officers of the Inland Revenue. I think that to ask us to believe in the necessity for this is to make a large demand upon our credulity.

*(8.28.) MR. GOSCHEN: A drawback is going to be given to silversmiths and that may involve a certain cost to them, and what we wish to provide against is the expense incurred in giving the drawback. I see nothing about felony in it.

Clause agreed to.

Friday, May 9, 1890.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government, having taken for other purposes the evening allotted by the fortune of the Ballot to the discussion of a proposal for a return to the ancient freedom of Debate on the Indian Budget, will propose some amendment of the procedure of the House in this respect?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): My right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury has asked me to answer this question. My right hon. Friend is not prepared to recommend the House to make any change in its Rules in the direction suggested by my hon. Friend. The effect of his proposal might be to postpone the statement of Indian finance and the discussion on the most important questions of Revenue and Expenditure for the consideration of some local or personal matter. Hon. Gentlemen who take an interest in India have opportunities, in common with other hon. Members, to put Motions on the Paper, and there are other occasions of Bills affecting India on which discussions may arise.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will remember that in connection with other questions there is always an opportunity of raising a discussion when we are asked to vote money. But in the case of India none of the salaries are voted here.

MR. GOSCHEN: No doubt the Indian salaries are not voted by this House in the same way as other salaries are; but I am afraid that any new course of procedure would only be likely to land us in difficulty.

POSTAGE RATES TO AUSTRALIA AND INDIA.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield) postponed until Monday a question to ask the Postmaster General what is the estimated loss to the Revenue by the reduction of the postage rates to Australia and to India from 6d. and 5d. to 2½d. in each case; what is the estimated additional loss to the Revenue if the postage rates to Australia and to India were reduced from 2½d. to 1d.; and what is the further estimated loss if the postage rates to all the Colonies and to India were reduced to 1d.?

Monday, May 12, 1890.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF INDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to give notice that on Thursday next I intend to present a Petition from inhabitants of Jessore, in the Presidency of Bengal, complaining of a present personal grievance, in regard to which they say there is urgent necessity for providing an immediate remedy. As the Under Secretary for India, in answer to a question from me, refused to make inquiry into this grievance, I shall, in pursuance of the Standing Order No. 80, move the House to discuss forthwith the matter contained in such Petition.

Subsequently,

MR. BRADLAUGH said: I wish to put a question to the First Lord of the Treasury in reference to the Order which stands number 3 on the Paper to-night (Indian Councils Bill). I wish to know whether it is likely to be taken before Whitsuntide?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I should like to take it before Whitsuntide, if possible, but I am afraid that it will not be possible.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Will the right hon. Gentleman say that it will not be taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am afraid that will be so.

THE INDIAN FACTORY ACT.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, inasmuch as the Indian Factory Act does not apply to the Native States, he will consider the advisability of urging upon their rulers the necessity of introducing legislation for the protection of women and children employed in the manufactories of those States, and who now work from dawn to sunset?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The policy of the Indian Government is to interfere as little as possible in the internal affairs of Native States, so long as the rulers govern justly. But the Secretary of State will bring this question to the notice of the Government of India, with a view to their advising Native States containing factories to follow the Factory Legislation of British India.

POSTAGE RATES TO INDIA AND AUSTRALIA.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the estimated loss to the Revenue by the reduction of the postage rates to Australia and to India from 6d. and 5d. to 2½d. in each case; what is the estimated additional loss to the Revenue if the postage rates to Australia and to India were reduced from 2½d. to 1d.; and what is the further estimated loss if the postage rates to all the colonies and to India were reduced to 1d.?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): The additional loss over and above that now incurred which will result from reducing the postages on letters sent from this country to India and Australia to 2½d. is estimated at £88,400 a year. A further loss of £42,000 a year would be the result of making the rate 1d. instead of 2½d. And a still further loss of £50,000 would follow a reduction of postage rates to all the colonies and India to 1d. The hon. Member will see that the total of these reductions by bringing the rate down to 1d. generally would come to £180,400.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POSTAL SERVICES.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether by far the greater proportion of the loss to the Revenue of £254,000 per annum on the Foreign and Colonial Postal Services is due to the East and West Indian Packet Services; and whether, down to the year 1858, this portion of the loss to the Revenue was charged upon the Admiralty Vote?

*MR. RAIKES: The loss of £254,000 per annum, referred to in my recent answer to the hon. Member for Huddersfield, is upon the Colonial Packet Service only, not upon the Foreign and Colonial Postal Services combined. Of that loss £167,000 relates to the East and West Indian Packet Services. Prior to the year 1860-61, the whole cost of the Packet Service was charged to the Admiralty, and consequently any loss that was then incurred for sea conveyance fell upon the Admiralty.

Tuesday, May 13, 1890.

INDIAN FACTORY LABOUR.

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that at a mass meeting of mill operatives, numbering upwards of 10,000 persons, which was held at Bombay on 24th April, a petition was adopted at the Millowners' Association to close the mills for four days in the month, and that two of the workpeople, both women, made speeches complaining of being pressed to come to work even on Sundays, and said that one day's rest out of the seven would be a great benefit both to the operatives and to the millowners; and whether any provision is made in the Indian Factory Act Amendment Bill for closing the factories on Sundays?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): It is stated in the Indian newspapers that such a meeting was held and such a petition adopted. The Bill now before the Indian Legislature provides four days' holiday a month for women and children.

MR. MACLEAN: Are the four holidays to be on Sundays?

SIR J. GORST: The Bill does not specify that they shall be on Sunday, but I believe there is very little doubt that Sunday will be the day selected.

Thursday, May 15, 1290.

MR. CURRIE, MAGISTRATE OF HOWRAH.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware that complaint has been made against Mr. Currie, Magistrate of Howrah, of assault and use of abusive language to native gentlemen within the precincts of the Court, on the 6th of August last; whether the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal thereupon ordered an inquiry to be made by Mr. Clay, officiating Commissioner of Burdwan; whether Mr. Clay made such inquiry; whether it was of a public or private character; and whether the gentleman who made the complaint was examined; whether Mr. Clay has submitted a Report; and whether the Bengal Government have communicated such Report to the Secretary of State; and, if not, whether the Secretary of State will call for a copy of Mr. Clay's Report, or, if already received, will he lay it upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has no information as to the facts stated in the question. If the hon. Member can furnish any sufficient ground for the statements the Secretary of State will inquire from the Government of India as to their truth.

THE CRAWFORD CASE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any application has been received on behalf of Mr. Arthur Crawford, to be refunded the legal expenses incurred by him in connection with the Poona Special Commission; and, if so, what decision, if any, has been come to in the matter?

SIR J. GORST: The payment of Mr. Crawford's legal expenses was, in the first instance, refused by the Secretary of State, although, in consideration of his services, other concessions to his family were made. A further application has been since made on the subject, which is still under consideration.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Has any further decision been come to in this case? I have had a notice upon the subject upon the Paper for some time, but I have not had an opportunity of obtaining an expression of opinion upon it.

***SIR J. GORST**: Yes, Sir. I believe that whenever the Secretary of State and the Government of India have made up their minds they will act without waiting for the discussion which is proposed to be initiated by the hon. Member.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I point out that there are strong expressions contained in the Papers now before the House with reference to this matter?

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether we are to understand that he intends, in the surprising course which he is taking, to lay down that there is no necessity for producing Papers in justification of the action of the Indian Government?

***SIR J. GORST**: The hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) and the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) somewhat exaggerate the importance of the matter. The only question now at issue is the cost which has been incurred by Mr. Crawford in the litigation which has taken place. Strong representations have been made to the Secretary of State upon that matter, and they are receiving proper consideration.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask whether what the hon. Gentleman terms "litigation" was not a series of charges against Mr. Crawford, a very high official, for accepting bribes from a number of Magistrates, and whether several of the Magistrates alleged to have been bribed have since been dismissed from the service of the State?

*MR. MACLEAN (Oldham): Is it not the fact that the Government of Bombay empowered a special tribunal to try Mr. Crawford on 33 different charges; is it not also the fact that he was acquitted upon 32 of those charges, and only partially convicted upon one—the 33rd—and did not the Secretary of State dismiss him from the Service, not on the ground of corruption, of which he had been acquitted, but on the ground, which he had himself confessed, that he was indebted to some of the native capitalists in his district for borrowed money?

*SIR J. GORST: Yes, Sir; all the questions which have been addressed to me are perfectly correct, and the particulars will be found in the Papers which have been presented to the House.

THE GUARANTEED SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if it is true that the Government, having just bought up the Guaranteed South Indian Railway at a heavy premium, is about to give another guarantee to the same or a re-organised company, for the purpose of working the line; if the terms of the fresh guarantee are three per cent., and half of any net profit, after paying the guarantee; and if the result will be that the Government, being able to borrow at three per cent., and having paid for the line at the rate of 131 per cent., now gives to the company three per cent., plus the salaries of the directors, the patronage of the administration, and the chance of additional payment in case of profit?

*SIR J. GORST: Negotiations are now going on between the Secretary of State and the South Indian Railway Company, with the view of the latter conducting the management and working of the line just purchased by the Secretary of State. The terms of the agreement are not yet settled.

SIRAJI RAO.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the numerous barbarities which have been committed by the present ruler of the Indore State, Siraji Rao, both before and since his installation; whether he is aware that, in consequence of the well-known brutal character of Siraji Rao, his late father, His Highness Tukoji Rao, had set him aside from the succession, and that, after his father died, his own mother begged that the Agent to the Governor General for Central India, Sir Lepel Griffin, would not recommend his installation to the Government of India, on the score that serious trouble would overtake the Indore State if he were made ruler; whether he is aware that Sir Lepel Griffin himself had, up to the date of the father's death, adopted the same attitude towards Siraji Rao as his own father and mother, although after that event he reported he was reformed; whether he is aware that one of the first acts of the new ruler was to dismiss and expel from the Indore State all the trusted advisers of his father, and to endeavour to outrage and plunder the ladies of his late father's family, and to put in chains, and subject to starvation and public ignominy, the Revenue Officer formerly in charge of the Crown Lands, and that he has recently expelled from the State his own uncle, Sir Cassu Rao Dadasahib, K.C.S.I., to whom the Court ladies have been looking as their natural protector; and whether he can inform the House what steps the Government of India are taking to provide a prompt remedy for this state of affairs?

SIR J. GORST: The subject of this question is best known to the House as the Maharajah Holkar. The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the negative. The attention of the Secretary of State has not been called to the "numerous barbarities" which are said to have been committed. The answer to the second paragraph is also in the negative. So far as the information in the Secretary of State's possession shows, no previous objection was made to the Maharajah's succession, which took place four years ago, either by his father or mother. The answer to the third paragraph of the question is that Sir Lepel Griffin recommended his immediate succession. In answer to paragraphs 4 and 5 I have to say that the Reports received from the Government of India do not bear out the allegations. The last Report, although not altogether favourable, shows a tendency to the improvement in the Government of the State; and no interference is at present contemplated.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Upon a point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I ask whether it is regular to speak, as this question does, of "the well-known brutal character of Siraji Rao?"

*MR. SPEAKER: Those words ought to have been omitted from the question. They seem to have crept in through inadvertence.

INDIGO RYOTS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India, with reference to a Petition presented by myself to-day, signed by 518 of the Indigo Ryots of Jessore, containing certain grave allegations, whether the right hon. Gentleman will undertake to transmit the Petition to India in order that the Government of India may make inquiry into the circumstances stated therein?

*SIR J. GORST: My noble Friend the Secretary of State for India has been supplied, by the courtesy of the hon. Gentleman, with a copy of the Petition to which he has referred; but as he is not in a position to form an opinion as to the genuineness of the Petition, or the truth of the statements it contains, he has referred it for inquiry to the Government of India.

Friday, May 16, 1890.

BENARES.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, with reference to his answer of the 12th July, 1889, whether the Secretary of State is now aware that, with respect to the seizure and confiscation of certain property and Trusts Funds belonging to the Temples of Gunnesh, Shiva, and Anpurna, and the Chattra at Benares, on the 19th January, 1858, an official inquiry was ordered by the Government of India on the 10th September, 1888; and that a Report, in reply, was forwarded to the Government of India, on the 14th February, 1889, by the Commissioners of Benares; whether that Report was favourable to the claims of the Trustee of the Temples, for the restitution of part of the property seized, the Commissioner suggesting that the property should be restored to the proper parties, and to the necessity for further investigation as to the other parts of the property; and whether such restoration has taken place, and such further investigation made; and, if not, if he can state the reasons?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): An official inquiry was ordered, and two Reports dated the 14th February and the 13th April, 1889, were made. These Reports were unfavourable to the claim of the Trustees of the Temples, nor did the Commissioner suggest, as alleged, that property should be restored. No restoration has taken place, because the Government of India, after full consideration of the case, have come to the conclusion that the claim now preferred is not only unsupported by any evidence, but is also improbable and inconsistent with the claimants' own conduct.

MR. BRADLAUGH: There appears to have been some misconception in regard to the matter. Will the Secretary of State lay upon the Table the two Reports of February and April, 1889?

*SIR J. GORST: Yes; their will be no objection to lay them on the Table if the hon. Member will move for them.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I will move for them.

DISMISSAL OF SURGEONS ON THE BENGAL ESTABLISHMENT.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State's attention has been drawn to the circumstances under which Kali Krishna Bágchi and two other surgeons on the Bengal Establishment have been dismissed from the Service; whether it is the fact that, in accordance with the rule governing the promotion of assistant surgeons, Kali Krishna Bágchi, after 14 years most satisfactory service, applied for examination at the septennial examination in Calcutta, in May last, and two other assistant surgeons, after a lesser term of service, applied for like examination; such examination took place, and all were declared to have satisfied the examiners; that the Inspector General of Hospitals addressed questions to the principal of the Medical College, and received assurances that every safeguard against foul play had been taken, and the examination conducted under adequate supervision; that, nevertheless, the Inspector General called upon Kali Krishna Bágchi and two others to undergo a supplementary examination prepared by himself; whether this course was in direct contradiction to the Regulations affecting medical examinations in India, the Examining Board alone having power to examine medical officers; whether Kali Krishna Bágchi and two others, having, on the ground that the proceedings were an imputation on their honour, and contrary to the Regulations, refused to submit themselves to the supplementary examination, were summarily dismissed for wilful disobedience of orders; whether the Head of a Department can thus summarily dismiss officers against whom no charges of misconduct are made or inquired into, in view of the fact that the Rules of the Government Service in India state that Indian

> "Subordinates are not to be dismissed merely in consequence of unfavourable opinions entertained towards them by their superiors, or for slight reasons, but on proof only of tangible delinquency in such matters as fraud and dishonesty, continued and wilful negligence, and all offences involving worse disgrace;"

and whether he will give instructions that the order for the dismissal of these officers shall be cancelled, and will direct an inquiry to be instituted into the whole circumstances, in which full opportunity will be given to the officers concerned to answer any charges which may have been brought against them?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has no official information as to the allegations contained in the question. If the hon. Member will furnish the Secretary of State with any ground for them, the matter will be referred for inquiry to the Government of India.

HALL-MARKING FOR INDIAN WARES.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any communications have been received from India with reference to the Government proposals to institute a special system of hall-marking for Indian wares; and, if so, whether he will state he nature of such communications?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has referred the proposal of the Government to the Viceroy, but there has not yet been time for a reply.

GOVERNMENT STAMPS FOR INDIA.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the amount annually paid to the Inland Revenue Department by the India Office for the control of the stamps required by the Government of India; how much of this amount is paid in salaries, and wages, and to whom; and whether any portion of this amount so received for a definite purpose, but unappropriated for that purpose, is treated as a miscellaneous receipt by the Board of Inland Revenue, and paid to the Exchequer as such, or refunded to the India Office?

*MR. JACKSON: I am informed that the amount paid for the year ending March, 1889, by the Revenue Department for services in India was £3,479 4s. 7d. Of this sum £2,489 4s. 7d. was paid for the wages of the men employed by the Indian Government. The balance of £990 was paid over to the Exchequer as miscellaneous revenue, under a general arrangement, signed by the Treasury in 1886. Of that sum £690 was paid in the shape of salaries to certain officers for the control and inspection of stamps, and the balance was held over for incidental expenditure.

MR. HANBURY: What was the incidental expenditure?

*MR. JACKSON: I cannot say, but I take it that in every Department there is a certain amount of incidental expenditure.

MR. HANBURY: On the Inland Revenue Vote I will call attention to the matter.

Monday, May 19, 1890.

THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): I had intended to ask the Under

Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, in consequence of the regulations which will presently come into action in regard to the limits of age for candidates for the higher branch of the Indian Civil Service, there have been strong expressions of opinion in the scientific Press and at the Universities, that the conditions of the examinations for this Service ought no longer to continue to be relatively so unfavourable to candidates whose studies have been chiefly in science as has hitherto been the case; whether he is aware that a Memorial, signed by 50 distinguished graduates of the University of Cambridge, including several heads of houses, many professors, and a large number of Fellows of Colleges, has been presented to the Civil Service Commissioners, in which it is pointed out that the position of the science tripos in their University is now practically on an equal footing with the classical or the mathematical tripos, both from its numbers and from the awards assigned by the colleges to those of their members who distinguish themselves therein; and whether he will endeavour to secure that changes shall be made for admission to the Indian Civil Service such as shall secure more equal prospects of success for those whose chief studies have been in science than are at present accorded in these competitions. At the request of the right hon. Gentleman, I beg to postpone the question.

INDIAN COUNCIL BILLS.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I had intended to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the amount of Council Bills sold since the commencement of the present financial year; what proportion is this amount of the whole of the current year's estimate; under whose advice has Her Majesty's Secretary of State forced on the market so much larger a proportion of the year's drawings than is needed for the current requirements of the India Office, and what is the present amount of the cash balances in the Home Treasury of the India Office? but, in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman, I will postpone the question.

Tuesday, May 20, 1890.

EMBARCATION OF TROOPS FROM INDIA.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will direct an inquiry to be made into the circumstances under which H.M.S. *Malabar* recently arrived in England with 500 invalids on board, of whom 100 or more were very ill, and about 40 were absolutely helpless; whether the actual hospital accommodation on board consisted of a cabin capable, when absolutely crammed, of holding 35 berths arranged in two tiers, and whether, under these conditions, erysipelas spread so rapidly that it was necessary to leave some cases behind at Aden, with the view of trying to stop the further progress of the disease; whether the surplus sick had to be put up in cots slung along the port side of the main troop deck, where they were insufficiently protected from cold, and exposed to the dust and dirt of coaling; and whether he will try and arrange that in future invalids shall be conveyed in troop ships properly adapted for the care of the sick?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The embarcation of these troops from India is entirely regulated by the Government of India. I have requested the Secretary of State for India to give the matter his consideration, and an investigation is now taking place.

COUNCIL BILLS.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the amount of Council Bills sold since the commencement of the present financial year; what proportion is this amount of the whole of the current year's estimate; under whose advice has Her Majesty's Secretary of State forced on the market so much larger a proportion of the year's drawings than is needed for the current requirements of the India Office; and what is the present amount of the cash balances in the Home Treasury of the India Office?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The amount of Council Bills and Transfers sold since the commencement of the present financial year is Rs. 5,32,34,000; being 24¼ per cent. of the estimate for the year. The sales have been made under the advice of the Finance Committee of the Council of India. It is incorrect to say the large amount sold has been "forced on the market"; the demand has been abnormally large. The present cash balance of the Home Treasury is £6,000,000.

THE WELSH FUSILIERS.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Second Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers was, on its return from Burma in 1887, sent to Lucknow instead of to a hill station, although it had suffered severely from the effects of the climate in Burma; if he can explain why it was that, although this corps was very sickly during the autumn of 1887 at Lucknow, and that the Local Medical Authorities strongly advised that it should be sent to a hill station in the spring of 1888, no notice was taken of this recommendation; whether during the trooping season of 1888-9 more men were invalided from this corps than from all the other troops then at Lucknow, consisting of two regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and two battalions of Royal Artillery; will he lay upon the Table the Reports of the medical officers at Lucknow; and whether the corps is now at Peshawur, or under orders for that station, which is notoriously a sickly station?

*SIR J. GORST: The statements contained in the question are substantially correct, except that the battalion is the 1st and not the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. The 2nd Battalion is much more happily circumstanced. It is at present quartered in Galway. The Secretary of State is not aware of the reasons why the recommendation of the Local Medical Authorities was not attended to. Such matters are, I believe, in the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief.

MR. CONYBEARE: Will the right hon. Gentleman ascertain if it was the fact that the Commander-in-Chief did communicate with the Medical Authorities and was in favour of their recommendation, but that afterwards that recommendation was set aside on representations which were made by other authorities? If that is so, I would also ask what is the use of having Medical Officers at all?

*SIR J. GORST: I do not know what the hon. Gentleman alludes to. I may, however, say that no recommendation from the Commander-in-Chief has been set aside by any orders from home.

MR. CONYBEARE: I did not mean that. What I meant to say was that the Commander-in-Chief was in favour of the recommendation of the Medical Authorities, but that his decision was reversed in consequence of representations made from another quarter.

*SIR J. GORST: Inquiry shall be made.

EAST INDIA (BENARES TEMPLES.)

Address for—

"Reports of the Commissioner of Benares to the Government of India of the 14th day of February, 1889, and the 4th day of April, 1889, as to certain Property and Trust Funds belonging to the Temples of Gunnesh, Shiva, and Anpurua, and the Chattra of Benares; and of any Despatch from the Government of India relating thereto."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Thursday, May 22, 1890.

SUBALTERN OFFICERS OF THE DRAGOON GUARDS.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the fact that three subaltern officers of the 2nd Dragoon Guards were rejected in their A and B examination, at Rawul Pindi, in November last, although the Board and President agreed that they were well qualified to pass, and exceptionally fitted for their work; whether their rejection arose from the fact that the President refused to sign a clause certifying that the candidates were qualified to command a regiment in the field, it being his opinion that no subaltern officer, however able and industrious, could possibly be so qualified; and why the President of an Examining Board is required to sign such a clause, seeing that no subaltern officer can be expected to comply with its conditions?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): All the examinations, both at home and abroad, are intended to be under the rules laid down in the Queen's Regulations, and they do not require that a subaltern officer should be qualified to command a regiment in the field. No Report has been received from India on the subject, but I will make inquiry about it.

CONSTRUCTION OF INDIAN RAILWAYS.

MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any new policy regarding the raising of funds for the construction of Indian railways has been brought before the Government of India by the Secretary of State; and whether he will lay upon the Table any correspondence connected therewith?

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question I should like to ask him another arising out of it, of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether he is aware that representations have been made to the Government of India by local Chambers of Commerce and other Representative Bodies, strongly urging the paramount importance, in the interests alike of the native population and of the English merchants, manufacturers, and workmen, of the opening up of the country by the extension of railway communication, and that the desire of these Bodies is for that policy, whether new or old, which will most rapidly and effectually attain that end?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In reply to the question of the hon. Member which appears upon the Paper I can only say that communications as to the policy regarding the raising of funds for the construction of Indian Railways have passed between the Secretary of State and the Government of India, but the correspondence is not yet complete; and, therefore, I cannot make any statement on the subject. With regard to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for North Kensington (Sir R. Lethbridge), I can only state that the Secretary of State is aware that representations of the character mentioned have been made, and that he will adhere to the policy so often advocated of promoting the extension of Indian Railways as fast as the circumstances will permit.

THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE—AGE OF CANDIDATES.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, in consequence of the regulations which will presently come into action in regard to the limits of age for candidates for the higher branch of the Indian Civil Service, there have been strong expressions of opinion in the scientific Press and at the Universities that the conditions of the examinations for this Service ought no longer to continue to be relatively so unfavourable to candidates whose studies have been chiefly in science as has hitherto been the case; whether he is aware that a Memorial, signed by 50 distinguished graduates of the University of Cambridge, including several heads of houses, many professors, and a large number of fellows of colleges, has been presented to the Civil Service Commissioners, in which it is pointed out that the position of the science tripos in their University is now practically on an equal footing with the classical or the mathematical tripos, both from its numbers and from the awards assigned by the colleges to those of their members who distinguish themselves therein; and whether he will endeavour to secure that changes shall be made for admission to the Indian Civil Service such as shall secure more equal prospects of success for those whose chief studies have been in science than are at present accorded in these competitions?

SIR J. GORST: I have to thank the hon. Member for postponing this question the other day. The answer to paragraph 1 and 2 of the question is in the affirmative. Such opinions have been expressed, and such a Memorial addressed to the Civil Service Commissioners, although not to the Secretary of State. The answer to the third paragraph is that the new regulations will shortly be issued, and the Secretary of State believes they will satisfy the object which the hon. Member desires.

THE SALT REVENUE IN ORISSA.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for

India if he can explain why the control of the Salt Revenue in Orissa has been made over to the Government of Madras, which differs in essential points from that of Bengal, which rules in Orissa; whether he is aware that although the manufacture of salt in Orissa was till recent years one of the staple industries of the districts of Cuttack and Balasore, the possession of salt earth, its manufacture or use has been made a criminal offence in those districts, even though the people wishing to use or manufacture it are willing to pay the duty; and whether, in view of the fact that this prohibition has thrown some 20,000 persons out of employment, and left large tracts of land teeming with salt earth utterly valueless, and that the price of salt has since the introduction of the Madras system increased in Orissa, the whole of what is used being now imported from Liverpool and elsewhere, he will consider the advisability of re-introducing the system under which the salt industry flourished in Orissa, and again allowing the manufacture of Punga salt, subject to the usual duties?

SIR J. GORST: The hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension as to the first paragraph of the question. The control of the Salt Revenue in Orissa has not been made over to the Government of Madras—only the administration. The control continues under the Government of Pengal. The manufacture of salt from salt earth has been prohibited, because it cannot be carried on without a great amount of smuggling. It is expected that the introduction of the Madras system will make salt cheaper and more plentiful, as it has done in Madras; and until the new system has been fully tried the Government will not revert to the old one.

EAST INDIA (CIVIL SERVANTS).

SIR J. GORST: I hope the House will allow a Select Committee to be appointed on the alleged grievances of the Uncovenanted Civil servants of India. It will be impossible for the Government to consent to the Amendment of which the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) has given notice. I hope, however, he will not oppose the appointment of the Committee.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I cannot consent to it.

SIR R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I would appeal to the hon. Member to forego his opposition.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I appeal to the hon. Member to accept my Amendment.

Friday, May 23, 1890.

POSTAGE TO INDIA AND AUSTRALIA.

COLONEL HILL (Bristol, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General what will be the effect upon the Imperial Revenue if, consequent upon the reduction of the colonial postage to 2½d. (estimated by him to involve a loss of £88,400), the number of letters to India and Australia be doubled; and what will be the financial effect of the same increase of correspondence if the postage on letters to India and Australia be reduced to one penny?

MR. RAIKES: As every letter for India or Australia carried for a postage of 2½d. would involve a loss, to double the amount of correspondence sent would but be to increase the loss; and, if the same increase took place in conjunction with a 1d. postage, the loss would, of course, be very largely augmented. With reference to the answer which I gave in this House on the 15th of May as to the estimated additional loss which the revenue would sustain by the establishment of universal penny postage, I may say that the sum of £400,000 then mentioned would be largely increased by any considerable addition to the correspondence.

THE INDIAN SALT TAX.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is a fact that the Indian Salt Tax was mainly if not entirely imposed in consequence of the loss which the Indian Government sustained by the fall in the gold value of the rupee; and, if so, whether the Secretary of State for India will, in view of the rise in the gold price of silver which has now taken place, bring the matter under the notice of the Governor General in Council, with the object of securing that at least a corresponding reduction shall be made in the Salt Tax?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State cannot admit that the increase of the Salt Tax in India was caused mainly, if not entirely, by the loss in exchange. That was one, but not the only one, of the causes which made the increase necessary. The Secretary of State and the Government of India are both anxious to reduce the Salt Tax to its former amount, so soon as it is possible to do so, but any statement at present would be premature.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That after Whitsuntide, unless the House otherwise order, the House do meet on Tuesday and Friday at Three of the clock, and that Government Business have priority on Tuesday; that Standing Order 11 be suspended, and the provisions of Standing Order 56 be extended to the other days of the week."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

*(3.5.) **MR. BRADLAUGH** (Northampton): In making future arrangements for the conduct of public business in this House there are two Government measures to which I wish to draw special attention. One is a Bill which has been sent down from the House of Lords—the Indian Councils Bill—in regard to which the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury is under a specific pledge to the House. I will only remind the House that I refrained from raising any question on this subject by Amendment to the Address on the distinct understanding that at least a real opportunity would be afforded for discussion. One of the matters which I should have felt it my duty to urge was the question of the extension of the Legislative Councils of India and the introduction of some principle of representation in reference to members. Although that Bill came down to this House from the House of Lords before Easter it has never yet been put down on the Paper as the First Order or even as an early Order. I am not prepared to deny that there is great pressure upon the Government in reference to public business, but I would venture to suggest that some day soon after the re-assembling of the House after the Whitsunside recess might be fixed for the Second Reading of the Bill, so that hon. Members may know when it will be taken, and might be prevented from coming down day after day, simply because the Bill is on the Paper, with very little prospect of its being brought on. The question is a very grave one, affecting, as it does, the interests of more than 210,000,000 persons in India, and as I refrained from raising any Indian question upon the Address I think I am entitled to make this demand. All that I ask is that the Bill may be taken on an early day, and that a couple of days' notice may be given, so that Members may not come down fruitlessly. The next measure is the Employers' Liability Bill. . . . .

***THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY** (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): . . . I recognise the claim of the hon. Member (Mr. Bradlaugh) for the early consideration of the Indian Councils Bill, and it shall be brought forward so as to give him an opportunity of stating his views upon it. . . .

Monday, June 2, 1890.

INDIAN LETTERS AND PARCELS.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether by receiving prepayment, the Post Office is held to undertake the safe delivery of letters, packets, and parcels from India; whether there are, nevertheless, numerous complaints, made of the tampering with letters, packets, and parcels in transit, and of their contents being removed or injured; and whether these robberies, chiefly affecting private soldiers in India and their friends in the United Kingdom, can be stopped?

***THE POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that, in the case of all letters, whether paid or unpaid, the Post Office does all in its power to deliver them safely. During the year ended the 31st of March last, the number of parcels received from India was 47,671, and of these the number alleged to be tampered with was four. There is good reason to believe, however, that in two of these four cases the tampering, if tampering there was, did not take place in the Post Office. Out of the 47,671 parcels the number alleged to have been damaged was 55. In many of these cases the contents were very fragile, such as butterflies, clay figures, and soap-stone models, or were not securely packed. As regards letters, we have no exact information of the number received from India during the same period, but the hon. Member will understand that they were very much more numerous than the parcels. Out of the total number, whatever it was, the number alleged to have been tampered with was nine; and in two out of these nine cases the articles abstracted were eventually recovered. Whether the losses chiefly affected private soldiers or not I am unable to say; but, be that as it may, the hon. Member will, I think, agree with me that it is not a bad record, and that there is not very much to correct.

EAST INDIA (CIVIL SERVANTS).

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I beg to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report upon the alleged grievances of the Uncovenanted Civil Servants of India, arising from the depreciation of the rupee and their leave and pension rules:
>
> That Mr. King, Mr. Howorth, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Bristowe, Viscount Baring, Sir William Plowden, Mr. Barbour, Mr. Alfred Pease, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Mac Neill, and Sir John Gorst be Members of the Committee:
>
> That the Committee have power to send for persons, Papers, and Records:
>
> That Five be the quorum."

DR. TANNER: I object.

SIR J. GORST: I hope the hon. Gentleman will not persevere with his objection.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I should be glad if the Resolution were agreed to. The Under Secretary of State has accepted a technical Amendment with regard to the description of the value of gold and silver. I thought it my duty to intervene between the taxpayers of India and the tribunal in this country, but I was appealed to in pathetic terms by gentlemen who have served under me in my youth and my mature age, and I was obliged to give in. I hope there will be a careful and full inquiry. There is a question which I have put down on the Paper for to-morrow, and which I hope the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Gorst) will consider before action is taken. I am told that, notwithstanding the presence in this country of a vast number of persons who are interested in the question, it is proposed to send home from India at full Indian salary a large number of gentlemen who wish to give evidence before the Committee. I hope that full consideration will take place before any such action is followed. As regards the constitution of the Committee, this is a judicial matter, and I think the Committee should be constituted on a purely judicial basis. I believe that at least one gentleman who has expressed the very strongest opinions on the subject has been nominated to serve on the Committee, and I do not think he is in a position to take an unprejudiced view of the question. I shall object to his name, and I hope that, at all events, the settlement of the names will be deferred till to-morrow.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I understand this is really to benefit a number of gentlemen in India who find the bargain they made has not turned out for them as satisfactorily as at first they expected. If it had turned out better they would have said nothing. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] They now propose to saddle the unfortunate taxpayers of India with a further charge, in consequence of the depreciation of silver as compared with gold. I shall object.

Motion deferred till to-morrow.

Tuesday, June 3, 1890.

CIVIL SERVANTS IN INDIA.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if it is true, as stated in the Indian newspapers, that, notwithstanding the presence in this country of so many of the claimants under the Indian Civil Service Rules, it is proposed to allow a number of the principal European Civil servants now in India to come home "on duty" at the public expense to give evidence before the proposed Committee, or to allow them to draw full Indian allowances beyond those to which they may be entitled under the ordinary leave rules, or in any other form to place a burden on the Indian taxpayer, to enable them to press the claims of their various Services in this country?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No, Sir; there is no foundation whatever for the statement contained in the question of the hon. Member. The Committee, if appointed, would itself determine what witnesses are necessary. The Secretary of State would, of course, give every reasonable facility for the attendance of such witnesses as the Committee might desire to examine.

Thursday, June 5, 1890.

WARLIKE STORES.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for India whether, the War Office having refused to submit to arbitration the question of prices for warlike stores, it is proposed to take any steps to obtain a decision of this House on a question which has now been pending for many years between the War Office and the Government of India?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I do not believe it is the intention of my noble Friend the Secretary of State for India to seek the assistance of the House of Commons in settling this matter.

MR. BRADLAUGH: In consequence of the right hon. Gentleman's answer, I beg to give notice to the Secretary of State for War that I shall raise the question on the Army Estimates.

ALLEGED RIOTING AT JESSORE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has yet received any communication from the Government of India respecting the disturbances, alleged rioting, and military occupation of districts in Jessore, Bengal; whether he can state to the House the nature of such communications; and whether he will lay them upon the Table?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has not received any information on the subject.

THE INDIAN POST OFFICE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it was with the sanction of the Secretary of State that Rule 732 of the Post Office Manual of 1881, that "No person other than a native of India can be appointed to any office in the Post Office Department," &c., has been altered in the Post Office Manual, Vol. III. of 1889, to the Rule (now Rule 389) that "Appointments in the Post Office Department are, with certain special exceptions, reserved for natives of India," &c.; whether he will state the nature of the "special exceptions," and when they were first acted upon; whether he will state the circumstances which induced this abrogation of a Rule imposed by the Secretary of State in 1872; and whether, if the alteration has been made without the knowledge of the Secretary of State, he will call for an explanation of the circumstances under which it was made?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has no information on the point, but will cause inquiries to be made.

PETITIONS OF RIGHT.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Attorney General if he has refused to give his fiat to Petitions of Right presented by officers who have been deprived of the advantages promised them by different warrants, and which have been withdrawn by the Secretary of State for War and by the India Office?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I do not understand the question of the hon. Member. Every application for leave to present a Petition of Right is considered upon its merits, and, as far as I am aware, in no case has such leave been refused under the circumstances suggested by the hon. Member.

Friday, June 6, 1890.

BRITISH INDIAN SUBJECTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what has been the result of the representations made regarding the position of British Indian subjects in the Transvaal; whether it is true, as stated in the public prints, that both in the Transvaal and in the Orange Free State these subjects of Her Majesty have been placed under severe disabilities, their trade very greatly restricted or prohibited, the privilege of holding land denied to them, and their presence only permitted under special licence; if there is any truth in these statements; whether Her Majesty's Government will urge strongly on the Governments of the South African Republics the claims to free ingress and equal treatment of the Indian subjects of Her Majesty as much as the claims of any other class of Her Majesty's subjects; whether, in the Colony of Natal, British Indian subjects are under any restrictions or disabilities not applicable to people of European blood; and whether there are any such distinctions in the Cape Colony?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): In consequence of representations made by Her Majesty's Government some modification has been made in the Transvaal Law regarding the position of British Indians, and further representations have been made, but no definite result has been yet arrived at. I may refer the hon. Member to the answers given by me on May 3, 1889, and February 25, 1890. The Government of the Orange Free State having recently proposed to enact a law restricting Asiatics in various respects, a representation has been made by the High Commissioner, the result of which is not yet known. It is, however, hoped that some modifications will be made. The laws and restrictions are based upon sanitary considerations; they make no discrimination against British subjects, but apply generally to all natives of Asia, and aim mainly at defining a distinct "quarter" in each town for their habitation. But, as I have before stated, further representations have been made. The Indian immigrant population in Natal is for certain purposes, and for its own protection, subject to what is virtually a special legal code, including numerous restrictions and regulations which are not applicable to people of European blood. Moreover, Indians and other semi-civilised races are subject to special bye-laws as to registration and supervision in the boroughs of Pietermaritzburg and Durban. It does not appear that Asiatic races are subject to any special restrictions in the Cape Colony. If the hon. Member wishes to study the Natal laws in detail they will be shown to him if he calls at the Colonial Office. It is impossible within the limits of an answer in Parliament to state the effect of one great head of law in three or four separate States.

Monday, June 9, 1890.

THE INDIAN POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, in spite of the instructions of the Secretary of State for India in 1879, to the effect that no one except a native of India should be appointed to posts in any branch of the Administration in India of Rs. 200 and upwards, except so far as the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay are concerned, on reference to himself and with his sanction, and that of the Viceroy from other parts of India, there are in the Post Office Department a large number of Europeans occupying posts designated for natives of India; whether his sanction was given, or that of the Viceroy, in each instance, to the several appointments; and whether he will state why natives of India were not appointed to these offices, seeing that identical positions in every presidency and province are filled by natives of India?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA** (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has had no explanation on this subject, but inquiry is being made.

THE CANTONMENTS ACT (INDIA), 1889.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government will lay upon the Table, and cause to be distributed, copies of "The Cantonments Act (India), 1889," and of any Rules which have been or are proposed to be made under Section 26, Clause 21, and Section 27, Sub-sections 2 and 4 of the said Act?

*SIR J. GORST: The Act and the Rules are both in the Library of the House, but if the hon. Member cares to move for copies of them, such copies can be laid on the Table as an unopposed Return.

THE INDIAN FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what consideration practically is being given to the recent request by the Officers of the Indian Forests Department for the assimilation of their Leave and Pension Rules with those of the Public Works Department?

*SIR J. GORST: This is a matter which was under discussion by the Secretary of State and the Government of India, when the consent of the Govern- was given to the proposed Committee on the grievances of the uncovenanted servants of India. The Secretary of State can take no further step till the House of Commons has determined whether the Committee shall be appointed.

KASHMIR.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India when the Papers relating to Kashmir, stated on the 18th of February to have been recently received from India, and early publication of which was then furnished, will be presented to the House; and whether the Secretary of State will state what condition he wishes to insure in Kashmir before he gives the Maharajah the opportunity of governing his State "in a way which will be a benefit to his subjects and to neighbouring countries as well," which it was stated the Government of India would be prepared to facilitate?

*SIR J. GORST: The Papers relating to Kashmir are now before my noble Friend the Secretary of State, and will be immediately presented to the House—I have little doubt before the expiration of the week. The hon. Member asks me what condition the Secretary of State wishes to insure in Kashmir before he gives the Maharajah the opportunity of governing his State in a way to benefit his subjects and neighbouring countries. The condition which the Secretary of State wishes to insure in Kashmir is one of just and upright government in the interest of the people of the State.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the majority of people of Kaskmir are of opinion that the only way to secure the state of things which the Secretary of State desires is the restoration of their lawful ruler and the withdrawal of all improper interference?

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir, there is no reason to suppose that the majority of the people of Kashmir entertain any such opinion.

THE BENGAL MEDICAL SERVICE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is now in a position to answer the question as to the circumstances under which Kali Krishna Bágchi and two other surgeons on the Bengal Establishment have been dismissed from the Service; whether it is the fact that, in accordance with the rule governing the promotion of assistant surgeons, Kali Krishna Bágchi, after 14 years most satisfactory service, applied for examination at the septennial examination in Calcutta in May last, and two other assistant surgeons, after a lesser term of service, applied for the like examination; that such examination took place, and all were declared to have satisfied the examiners; that the Inspector General of Hospitals addressed questions to the Principal of the Medical College, and received assurances that every safeguard against foul play had been taken, and the examination conducted under adequate supervision; that, nevertheless, the Inspector General called upon Kali Krishna Bágchi and two others to undergo a supplementary examination prepared by himself; whether this course was in direct contradiction to the Regulations affecting medical examinations in India, the Examining Board alone having power to examine medical officers; whether Kali Krishna Bágchi and two others, having, on the ground that the proceedings were an imputation on their honour, and contrary to the Regulations, refused to submit themselves to the supplementary examination, were summarily dismissed for wilful disobedience of orders; whether the head of a Department can thus summarily dismiss officers against whom no charges of misconduct are made or inquired into, in view of the fact that the Rules of the Government Service in India state that Indian

> "Subordinates are not to be dismissed merely in consequence of unfavourable opinions entertained towards them by their superiors, or for slight reasons, but on proof only of tangible delinquency in such matters as fraud and dishonesty, continued and wilful negligence, and all offences involving disgrace";

and whether he will give instructions that the order for the dismissal of these officers shall be cancelled, and will direct an inquiry to be instituted into the whole circumstances, in which full opportunity will be given to the officers concerned to answer any charges, which may have been brought against them?

SIR J. GORST: The answer to the first question is in the affirmative. The answer to the second is in the negative. The facts are not correctly stated in the question. The examination was a compulsory one, failure to pass which involved dismissal. The three assistant surgeons were never declared officially to have satisfied the examiner. The Inspector General, whose duty it was to decide whether they had passed or not, was not satisfied with their answers, and ordered them to answer further questions. This was not inconsistent with any existing Regulations. The assistant surgeons having, after explanations and warnings, persisted in disobeying the orders of the Inspector General were suspended from office in the first instance, and their dismissal was finally confirmed by the Government of India, to whom the matter was referred by the Government of Bengal. The Secretary of State sees no reason to interfere.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Have the regulations set out in the Circular Memorandum of the 15th of September been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State?

SIR J. GORST: I think that is the date of the Circular, but I am not prepared to pledge myself to anything with regard to it without notice.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I will again draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the matter.

THE EASTERN TELEGRAPH COMPANIES.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, with a view of improving and cheapening communication between the different parts of the British Empire, the Government will consider the advisability of buying the Cables of the Eastern Telegraph Companies, or of laying new cables to compete with those already in existence?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I have been asked by my right hon. Friend to reply to this question. Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to enter upon the wide question, involving as it would international negotiations, of buying up the cables of the Eastern Telegraph Companies, nor is it certain that their acquisition by the Government would lead to the desired results. But the Government would be glad if the labours of the International Telegraph Conference now sitting at Paris should have some result in the direction indicated in the question of the hon. Member.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury after what hour to-night he will not take this Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Bill will not be taken after 10 o'clock.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL [LORDS.]

(No. 197.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Second Reading be deferred till Thursday."—(*Sir John Gorst.*)

*(12.2.) MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I think the Government ought to state when this Bill will be taken. There was a distinct promise given on the part of the Government that the Debate on this Bill should be taken between Easter and Whitsuntide, but that has been departed from. I do not wish to put the Government in an unfair position, but I received notice late on Saturday night that the Bill was to be taken to-day, and that is not a fair carrying out of the arrangement that Members should have due notice of the Bill coming on. It should be set down as the first or second Order, for there must be a real Debate upon the Second Reading, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman in charge if

there is no intention of taking the Bill on Thursday, to put it down for a later day.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I desire to confirm what has been said by the hon. Member. This is really a very important matter, and, in view of the interest the question excites in India, I hope the Government will make arrangements for a reasonably long Debate of three or four hours.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): It was the intention to take the Second Reading to-day, and if business had followed its usual course I have no doubt we should have been able to do so. I would suggest that the hon. Member for Northampton should to-morrow put a question on the subject to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Then Thursday is merely the *pro formâ* postponement, not a fixture?

Question put, and agreed to.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

EAST INDIA (CIVIL SERVANTS).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report upon the alleged grievances of the Uncovenanted Civil Servants of India arising from the change in the relative value of gold and silver money and their leave and pension rules."—(*Sir J. Gorst.*)

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I object to the Motion, and it may perhaps save the right hon. Gentleman inconvenience if I intimate my intention to oppose the Motion every night, though I have to attend for that purpose only.

Motion deferred till to-morrow.

Tuesday, June 10, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, in consequence of what took place at the close of business last night, when we were informed by the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill that it would be put down for Thursday, whether on Thursday the Bill will be actually taken, or, if not, it may be carried on to a date at which it can be taken, as great inconvenience is now being felt by Members interested in the Bill and who wish to take part in the Debate. My question to the right hon. Gentleman now is, can he possibly say when the Bill will be taken; and, if not, will he name a day before which it shall not be taken, and so relieve Members from the uncertainty of coming down to take part in a Debate which may not come on?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am very sorry that hon. Members should feel any inconvenience with regard to the course of public business; but hon. Gentlemen have been a sufficiently long time in the House to know that it is not always possible to make provision that Orders of the Day causing the attendance of Members shall be reached, as, unfortunately, it is not always competent for the House to reach them. We had hoped that the Order would be reached in the ordinary course of things, but in that we were disappointed. Under the circumstances, I am not in a position to say when the Order will be taken; but I will endeavour, as far as possible, to meet the convenience of hon. Gentlemen.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask whether the Bill will not be taken on Thursday, because there was not an absolute pledge that it should. It was the understanding, I believe, that at least two days' notice should be given, so that I might communicate with hon. Members interested in the measure.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not able to say whether it will be taken or not on that day.

Thursday, June 12, 1890.

EAST INDIA (CANTONMENT ACTS).

Address for—

"Copy of Cantonment Acts, 1889, and any Rules made under Section 26, Sub-section 21, and under Section 27 of the same."—(*Mr. John Ellis.*)

THE PUNJAB.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has any information respecting the action of the police in certain cases which are reported to have occurred in Amritsar, a city in the Punjab, with a population of over 150,000; whether, under the Punjab Police Act, or any other law in India, it is permissible for the Police Authorities to keep descriptive rolls of parties who have been in prison, and, while these parties are at liberty and are charged with no offence, to subject their persons to rigorous examination in the public streets; whether certain girls were so examined in public places in Lahore; whether he is aware that a girl named Vid Koer was thus examined in a public bazaar, and that, in consequence of this treatment, she absconded, was found by the police, detained in custody, and not allowed to see her parents or to be released until she signed an agreement denying the examination of her person in public, although the examination was witnessed by many people who are ready to testify thereto; whether he is aware that a Brahmin girl, aged 20, named Dhau Deir, was, against her protest, and in spite of her cries, taken into a public street and examined, no occasion for this as regards wrongdoing on her part being even alleged; whether he can state how men and women have been so examined, and whether the particulars of such examinations are contained in descriptive rolls in the Police Register; who is the officer responsible for these occurrences; whether he has been punished in any way; and whether an inquiry has been instituted, and, if the inquiry is simply of a Departmental kind, whether the Secretary of State will give instructions for an independent and thorough investigation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No, Sir. My noble Friend the Secretary of State has no official information that enables him to instruct me to answer the question. The matter will be referred to the Government of India in the usual way.

PAYMENTS TO ANGLO-INDIAN NEWSPAPERS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India have made any payments, and for what purposes, to, and which of, the Anglo-Indian newspapers published in India; whether it was with the knowledge or approval of the Secretary of State that an offer was made to the *Times of India*, a newspaper published at Bombay, as stated in a leading article in that journal, "to become the official organ of the Government of India;" whether the proprietor of the *Times of India* is correct in saying that, in answer to such offer, he gave "so clear and distinct a negative as to admit of no misconception;" and whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table the correspondence relating to this matter?

SIR J. GORST: In answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I have to say that, except payments for advertisements, the Secretary of State is not aware of any payments being made by the Government to Anglo-Indian newspapers. The answer to the second paragraph is in the negative. In reply to paragraph No. 3, the Secretary of State is not aware of any such occurrence arising, or statement being made. In answer to the last paragraph, I have to say that there is no correspondence, and therefore none can be produced.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Am I to understand from the right hon. Gentleman that the statement made in the *Times of India* is not correct?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State for India is not aware that the *Times of India* has ever made such a statement.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I will supply the right hon. Gentleman with it.

Friday, June 13, 1890.

HOME ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he can give the House detailed particulars respecting the undermentioned items in the Home Accounts of the Government of India, of which no particulars appear in Paliamentary Paper, No. 171, 9th of May, 1890:—The persons to whom payments were made, the amounts paid in each instance, and the reason for making such payments of compassionate allowances,

£2,457 14s. 6d. (page 9); like information respecting compassionate and miscellaneous pensions, £4,987 7s. 6d., and gratuities £585 (page 11); like information respecting gratuities granted on retirement to members of the Uncovenanted Services of India, £2,057 2s. 1d. (page 11), and the circumstances under which the following charges were incurred: "Cost of stores lost in transit in India," £7,808 4s. 1d. (page 13), showing through default stores to this amount were lost; and whether the stores were insured?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): If the hon. Gentleman will move for the information, it will be given as an unopposed Return.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I will move for it on Monday.

Monday, June 16, 1890.

EAST INDIA (ACCOUNTS.)

Address for—

"Detailed Particulars respecting the undermentioned Items in the Home Accounts of the Government of India, of which no particulars appear in Parliamentary Paper No. 171, 9th May 1890:—

The Persons to whom payments were made, the Amounts paid in each instance, and the reason for making such payments of Compassionate Allowances, £2,457 14s. 6d. (page 9);

Like information respecting Compassionate and Miscellaneous Pensions, £4,987 7s. 6d., and Gratuities, £585 (page 11);

Like information respecting Gratuities granted on retirement to members of the Uncovenanted Services of India, £2,057 2s. 1d. (page 11); and

The circumstances under which the following Charges were incurred: 'Cost of Stores lost in transit in India,' £7,808 4s. 1d. (page 13)."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

COMMERCIAL TREATIES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Treaties of Commerce concluded in 1862 and 1865 with Belgium and the German Zollverein preclude the conclusion of any preferential commercial arrangement for mutual advantage between the United Kingdom and Her Majesty's Colonial or Indian possessions, and if these foreign restrictions upon domestic commerce are extended by the most favoured nation agreement to every other foreign State; and in such case if, having regard to the well-known Report of the Privy Council of Canada

> "that trade should be as free as practicable between the various portions of the Empire, having regard solely to their own interests, and unfettered by any obligation to treat others with equal favour,"

as also to repeated expressions of opinion to like effect in the Dominion Parliament, and in Australasia, an undertaking can be given that advantage shall be taken of the opportunity afforded by the forthcoming expiration upon due notice of several foreign Treaties of Commerce to denounce and determine such inter-British commercial disability?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I am not prepared to admit that the Treaties to which the hon. Member refers would have, in all cases, the effect suggested in the first part of his question, but he will find the clauses referred to in the Paper presented to the House of Commons, dated 17th April, 1888. (C 5369.) This Paper also includes a Memorandum by Sir E. Hertslet, on the subject. No doubt this important matter will be considered when new Commercial Treaties are about to be concluded with foreign States.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I would ask the First Lord of the Treasury—and if he is unable to answer now I would ask him to consider it with a view to giving an answer to-morrow—whether he can fix a date for taking the Indian Councils' Bill, especially as I understand it was one of the matters the Prime Minister referred to the other day as of primary importance?

MR. J. MACLEAN: Would the Government consider the expediency of putting down this Bill as the first Order of the Day on a particular date, instead of relegating it to the fag-end of the evening, when provisions of importance cannot be adequately discussed?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have already said that I am fully aware of the importance of the measure to which the hon. Members refer. I fully realise its very great importance, but at the present moment it is impossible for me to name a date. I will include this subject in the statement I shall have to make to-morrow.

EAST INDIA (CIVIL SERVANTS.)

MR. A. O'CONNOR: There is a Motion standing in the name of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Gorst), as to the inquiry into the fall in the value of the rupee and the pensions of East India (Civil Servants.)

MR. JACKSON: It is postponed.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: This Motion is put on the Paper, and is passed over night after night without intimation.

Order postponed till Monday next.

Tuesday, June 17, 1890.

RAILWAYS IN INDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can state to the House the nature of, or whether he will lay Papers upon the Table showing the various proposals made during the past 12 months, to or by the Secretary of State in Council, and to or by the Government of India, and to either, by any other persons in relation to particular railways in India, or in relation to any general scheme of Indian Railway finance, together with any correspondence thereon?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): My noble Friend the Secretary of State is of opinion that it is not expedient to give the Papers asked for in the Question, nor would it be convenient or practicable to do so. He wishes me to suggest to the hon. Gentleman that he will have an opportunity of discussing the matter on the statement in connection with the Indian Budget.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to give notice to the right hon. Gentleman that if he does not lay these Papers on the Table before the discussion of the Indian Budget takes place I shall feel it my duty to submit to the House a summary of the proposals made to the Government, with the criticisms of the Government of India upon them.

Monday, June 23, 1890.

MAHARAJAH OF REWAH (PETITION).

Ordered, That the Petition of the Princes and subjects of the Maharajah of Rewah, presented 10th June, be printed and circulated with the Votes.—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

SALT TAX IN ORISSA.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India would grant a Commission to inquire into the whole question of the Salt Tax in Orissa, and the effects resulting from the administration of the tax being placed under the Madras Authorities; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Report from the Bengal officials concerning the present manner of levying the tax and its result on the population?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA** (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No, Sir. In the opinion of the Secretary of State it is not necessary at present to appoint a Commission. A special Report has been called for respecting salt affairs in the district of Orissa.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: To what day will the Indian Councils Bill be postponed?

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: Next Monday.

EAST INDIA (CIVIL SERVANTS).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report upon the alleged grievances of the Uncovenanted Civil Servants of India arising from the change in the relative value of gold and silver money and their leave and pension rules."

The Committee was accordingly nominated of:—Mr. King, Mr. Howorth, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Bristowe, Viscount Baring, Sir William Plowden, Mr. Barbour, Mr. Alfred Pease, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. MacNeill, and Sir John Gorst.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Sir John Gorst.*)

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Motion whether there is any hope of getting any Report from the Committee this Session with regard to the grievances of the Uncovenanted Indian Civil Servants?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I am afraid that, owing to the long delay that has taken place in the appointment of the Committee, it may be difficult for them to report during the present Session.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): May I suggest to the Government that they should ask for the appointment of a Royal Commission rather than of a Select Committee, because in that case the Commission will be enabled to carry on its inquiries during the Recess, which a Select Committee of this House cannot do. I should add that I propose to put down an Amendment to the Licensing Bill, that the £350,000 which the Government propose to give for the extinction of licences should be allocated so as to recoup these Indian Civil Servants for their losses instead of being used for the compensation of publicans.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I observe from the language of the Motion that the Committee is to inquire into the alleged grievances of the Uncovenanted Civil Servants of India. All I desire to do now is to express a hope that the inquiry will extend to the grievances of the natives as well as of the Europeans.

Question put, and agreed to.

Thursday, June 26, 1890.

STAMPS FOR INDIA.

MR. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what sum is annually paid by the India Office to the Inland Revenue Department in connection with the control of stamps and stamped paper for India, and on what terms; whether the India Office receives any detailed statement of the manner in which that sum is expended, and whether any portion of it remains unexpended upon the special purpose for which it is paid?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The sum is £3,480, appropriated as follows (1):—Personal allowances to certain Revenue Officers, £590; (2) Contributions towards superannuations, £100; (3) payments to Imperial Exchequer for miscellaneous services of Inland Revenue Officers during official hours, and not covered by the personal allowances above, £300; (4) salaries and expenses of Supervising Staff, £2,490. Detailed statements are received as to items (1) and (4), but not as regards the others. No portion remains unexpended.

INDIAN TELEGRAPHISTS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it was with the sanction of the Secretary of State that the rule of the Telegraph Department of the Government of India, which laid down that where quarters could not be provided in the respective telegraph buildings for signallers, such signallers, both European and Indian, should have house rent allowance on a given scale, was changed; whether it was with his approval that while the allowance was continued to Europeans it was stopped for Indians, and whether there is any difference in the duties performed by European and Indian signallers which would justify the withdrawal of these allowances; and, if there be no difference, whether he will give instructions to the Government of India to restore to the Indian signallers the house allowance hitherto granted to them?

SIR J. GORST: No change has been made in the rules of the Telegraph Service in the matter referred to in the question. Native Indian signallers have never been required to reside in the telegraph buildings as their social and religious customs would forbid them doing so. They have, therefore, never been entitled to house allowance.

KASHMIR.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India when the repeatedly promised Papers relating to Kashmir will be presented to this House, and whether, in view of the present painful position of His Highness the Maharajah, the Secretary of State will at once authorise a judicial inquiry into the grave charges made by the

Government and solemnly denied by His Highness?

SIR J. GORST: I have to-day laid the Papers on the Table. The action of the Government in Kashmir has been based, not upon grave personal charges made against the Maharajah, but upon the long-continued misgovernment of Kashmir, which rendered it necessary, in the interest of the people, to put an end to chronic oppression and misrule. Neither the Secretary of State nor the Government of India, as I have several times stated in Parliament, have ever attached any importance to certain treasonable and criminal correspondence attributed to the Maharajah. It is obvious that the conduct of the Government in making such arrangements as involve the withdrawal of the Maharajah for a time on political grounds from active participation in the Government of the State cannot be made the subject of investigation by a judicial officer.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I will ask when the Papers are likely to be circulated to Members, and whether, if they disclose a different state of things from that which has just been stated, the Government will afford any opportunity for this unfortunate gentleman to repel accusations which he declares to be absolutely without foundation.

*SIR J. GORST: The distribution of Papers does not rest with me. It depends on the printing authorities of the House, over whom I have no control. With regard to the second part of the question, I think the hon. Member had better wait until he sees the Papers.

MR. BRADLAUGH: In view of the excessive gravity of the matter, as I understand the Papers, I shall avail myself of such opportunities as the Forms of the House permit unless the Government afford some opportunity to this unfortunate gentleman to answer the charges made against him.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Can the right hon. Gentleman state now whether the Indian Council Bill, which stands for Monday, only stands formally for that day; if so, can he fix a day when the Bill will be taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not able to state when the Indian Council Bill will be taken, but it will not be taken on Monday. It must stand over until the more pressing Bills are disposed of.

MR. BRADLAUGH: It will not be taken on Monday?

*MR. W. H. SMITH was understood to reply in the negative.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, June 27th, 1890.

THE ARMY IN INDIA.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON, in rising to call attention to the Papers relating to the organisation of the Army in India, and especially to the recommendation of successive Governments of India in favour of the abolition of the existing arrangements for the command-in-chief of the Madras and Bombay Armies, said: My Lords, although I propose to confine myself strictly to the single point adverted to in the notice which I have laid upon your Lordships' Table, I fear such is the importance of the question, that I shall have to take up a larger portion of your Lordships' time, and to request your indulgence to a greater extent than I should have desired, but I will endeavour to compress my observations within the briefest space which is consistent with making intelligible the case which I have to present to you. The single point of our great military organisation in India, to which I am anxious to invite your attention, relates to the existing arrangements for the chief commands of the Madras and Bombay Armies, those two Armies which are known as the Armies of the Minor Presidencies. It will be within the knowledge of most of your Lordships that the Madras and Bombay Armies have separate Commanders-in-Chief, and are also administered by separate Military Departments. The Commander-in-Chief in India is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, but for the other two Presidential Armies, there are distinct officers bearing that title, and exercising in the main the functions which attach to it. No doubt the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India has now for a considerable time exercised, especially with regard to the British troops in that country, a certain amount of general control and direction, but for practical purposes of discipline and administration, the Armies of Madras and Bombay are under the command of their own Commanders-in-chief, and under the Military Departments connected with the Governments of those two Presidencies. Now, my Lords, it is very easy to see how this system sprang up, and the necessity which originally existed for an arrangement of this kind, because when those separate Armies were first brought into existence there were no railways, there were no electric telegraphs in India, and there were interposed between Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, vast territories of independent and often hostile native princes, so that it would have been practically—and I might almost say physically—impossible for one Central Commander-in-Chief in India to attend immediately to the discipline and administration of Armies at such vast distances from each other, and separated in the manner I have described. But, as your Lordships are well aware, a vast change has taken place in India since those days. Railways have been made connecting almost every part of the country with other districts, electric telegraphs are to be found everywhere, and by the processes of conquest or lapse, or annexation, or in some other way, most of those independent native States have disappeared, and there is an uninterrupted geographical communication between the three Presidencies. It is not to be wondered at that as the consequence of changes of that description it should now be thought by many persons, and as, I venture to say, I shall show your Lordships in a few moments, it has been thought by four successive Governments in India, that the time has come for making a large and fundamental alteration in this system of separate administrations for the different portions of the Indian Army. Changes of a similar kind have been made in the military organisations of almost every country in the world, as the result of similar changes and developments to those which have taken place in India. My Lords, this subject was first largely gone into at the time when my noble Friend the Earl of Lytton was Viceroy of India. He, in the year 1879, appointed a very influential Commission to inquire into the organisation of the whole Indian Army. That Commission had upon it such Civilians as the late Sir Astley Eden and the present Sir Charles Bernard, and it had upon it also generals so well known and so highly distinguished as Sir Frederick Roberts, General Sir Napier Campbell, and General Macpherson, besides various other Commissioners, all of them in their way men of distinction, whose names I need not detail to your Lordships at the present moment. No doubt, my Lords, the principal object which Lord Lytton had in view in establishing that commission was, as I have always understood, that of inquiring whether it was possible to make important reductions in the military expenditure of the Government of India. It was appointed at a time when the financial condition of India was unsatisfactory, and when it was supposed to be a great deal more unsatisfactory, as I have always thought, than it really was. That, I have no doubt, was the principal object of my noble Friend; but he always professed and always entertained as an object of not less importance, though possibly he might have thought of less urgency, the rendering of the organisation of the Indian Army more efficient. My Lords, it must always be borne in mind that the Presidential system of command, as it is called, had been gradually broken into, and impaired and weakened and altered before this Commission was appointed. A great measure of financial centralisation had taken place, the expenditure upon the Army had been brought altogether under the control of the Government of India, and in that way, among many others, the Presidential system has been impaired and broken into. What was left of it was imperfect, and, as I think I shall show your Lordships presently, it was hampering and inconvenient. I have often heard it said that this system of Presidential command is a great out-growth of long experience, and an organisation that has been built up by the accumulated experience of many years. That is quite a mistake. The Presidential system was established, as I have said, under totally different circumstances from those which exist at present, and what has gone on from those days has not been the building up of a system the foundations of which were established a century ago, but it is the breaking down at all points of a system which was established in tolerable perfection at the time it was first set up. Lord Lytton's Commission went very fully indeed into the whole question, and made a very complete, elaborate, and most able Report. I am afraid, my Lords, that that Report and the Papers connected with it have never been laid upon the Table of your Lordships' House, but they have been laid before the other House of Parliament, and, consequently, I am free to quote from them in the course of my remarks. That Commission, after a careful consideration of the whole question, reported to Lord Lytton's Government at the commencement of 1880; and their Report was immediately taken into consideration by that Government, but, as your Lordships are aware, Lord Lytton did not remain long in that year in the position of Viceroy of India—he resigned in the month of April or May, and his Government, therefore, were only able to send home a Despatch forwarding the Report of the Commission with certain Minutes by some Members of the Government. They were not able to go into the subject fully themselves, and to give a deliberate opinion as a Government upon it. Those Minutes show, no doubt, that there was considerable difference of opinion among the Members of Lord Lytton's Government upon the particular point to which I am now drawing your Lordships' attention. But there was no doubt whatever of Lord Lytton's own opinion upon the subject, because in a very able Minute which he wrote, and which has been sent home and laid before the other House, he used this language—

> "Under the present system the Armies of Madras and Bombay are neither independent Armies nor portions of one great Army of India. All the evils of provincialism are maintained without that complete independence which were it proved to be desirable could alone justify the maintenance of the control at present exercised by the Local Governments."

As I have said, Lord Lytton was only able to record his opinion upon the more salient points of the Report, and when I went out and succeeded my noble Friend, in 1880, the Report had only been sent home with those recorded opinions, and it was placed in my hands just as I left this country. I need scarcely tell your Lordships that, with an Afghan war upon my hands, I was not anxious to take up this question, or to go into the consideration of the very large matters which were involved in it, and the Government with which I had the honour to be connected had no opportunity of doing so until in the course of the following winter of 1881 it was expressly directed to do so by the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Hartington. It was at Lord Hartington's special direction that we took up the Report and went into the matter, and we did so very fully. We sent no less than 15 Despatches upon the subject to the India Office, dealing with the Report in all its parts, and with the exception of a difference of opinion upon this very question with which I am now dealing on the part of the gallant officer who was Commander-in-Chief in 1881, Sir Frederick Haines, the Government of India were upon this point at all events, and upon almost every other point, absolutely unanimous in their recommendations. Sir Frederick Haines differed from us, but he was succeeded by a man possessing, I think I may say without question, the largest experience, probably of any living man, of the Indian Army, and upon military affairs in India, I mean Sir Donald Stewart, and my gallant friend Sir Donald Stewart cordially concurred in the recommendation of the Government with which I was connected, as did all my other Colleagues at that time. I should remark here that the military member of the Council, who is, of course, required to be very well acquainted with these matters, and who is a distinct officer from the Commander-in-Chief, was General Wilson, who had been for a long time secretary to the Military Department of the India Office, and who had been specially selected by Lord Hartington to be sent out there, the office of Military Member of the Council having become vacant at the time when this subject was under consideration. Upon this point, my Lords, we also took exactly the same view as had been taken by the Commission and by Lord Lytton himself as Viceroy, and we recommended that the office of Presidential Commander-in-Chief in the two Minor Presidencies and the two Military Departments of Madras and Bombay should be abolished—that the Madras and Bombay Armies should be commanded by two Lieutenant Generals, that the special

Military Department should be got rid of, and that the unity of command so established should be placed in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief in India. But I should ask your Lordships to particularly bear in mind this point, both as to the Government of Lord Lytton and as to that with which I was connected, that we never proposed for a moment the abolition of the separate Armies of Madras and Bombay. In reference to this point, I may mention that Lord Lytton used in his Minute, what, I think, was a very pertinent expression; he spoke of the Armies of India as being "like water-tight compartments." We never proposed to alter that water-tight compartment system; we objected to the maintenance of separate Commanders-in-Chief and Departments, just as Lord Lytton himself objected to them. Indeed, the Commission went further in that very direction, and proposed to divide the Bengal Army into two portions, so that instead of having three water-tight compartments there would have been four. The Government I was connected with were unable to adopt that recommendation, for reasons which I cannot enter into at the moment; but I am anxious your Lordships should clearly understand that when we proposed, for reasons which I will lay before you briefly in a moment, that the separate Commands-in-Chief and Military Departments of Madras and Bombay should be abolished we were not anxious or desirous that the separate Armies should cease to exist. We thought that that was an important portion of the military organisation, although experience has shown (and that is an important matter) the difficulty in the present day of really and strictly maintaining that separation with our present increased means of communication in India. We found when we came to look into the matter that the Bombay Army was very largely recruited from among the Punjaubees. Sikhs and Pathans make very good soldiers, and the Bombay Government was always seeking to get such men into its ranks, thereby upsetting the water-tight compartment principle; and we had to lay down stricter regulations than had been previously in force in order to prevent this, if I may so term it, "poaching upon the proper manor" of the Bengal Army, though I am afraid those regulations were not always successful in preventing the continuance of the practice. The proposal which the Government with which I had to do submited to the Secretary of State, was that the Presidential Armies of Bombay and Madras, being maintained as separate bodies, they should be brought more directly under the unity of command of the Commander-in-Chief in India, and that the two officers who had been hitherto called by the names of Commanders-in-Chief in Madras and Bombay should cease to hold that title, that they should be called Lieutenant Generals, and that they should be strictly under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief in India and of the Military Department of the Government of India. Now, my Lords, it has been sometimes said by the critics of this proposal that we were the advocates of an extreme system of centralisation. That, I venture to say, was altogether a mistake. We did not desire more centralisation. On the contrary, we submitted several proposals in exactly the opposite direction, especially tending, among other things, to give greater financial latitude to the commanders of the local Armies. I very well recollect that my noble Friend Lord Kimberley, who was Secretary of State for India at the time, seemed to think that was going too far in the direction of decentralisation by giving greater financial latitude to the Commanders of those Armies. My Lords, I merely mention this matter in order to show that it was from no desire for centralisation that those proposals were made. The principle upon which we desired to base the organisation of the Indian Army was the principle of unity of command, not of close centralisation. On the contrary, we would have given as much latitude as we could to the local commanders, but we desired to secure that which, I venture to say, is essential to any military organisation in the present day and under the conditions of our time—we desired to secure complete and undoubted unity of military administration in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief in India. Our main object, my Lords, I may say in respect to this part of our proposal, was an increase of efficiency, but we believed that some economy, though not a very large economy, would result from this part of the proposal. Some doubts have been thrown upon that matter, and I do not want to enter into any controversy about it. I have said that I believe the economy which would have resulted from our proposal would not have been a large, one; but in the present financial condition of India, I think even small economies are not to be despised. But the principal object we had in view was increased efficiency, by the securing of that unity of command which appeared to us to be so essential. Now, my Lords, the views which the Government of India of that time entertained were not founded upon theory; they were founded upon practical experience. That which Lord Lytton had found during the part of the Afghan War which took place when he was Viceroy, I found equally during the part of it which occurred while I held that office. It was the practical experience which we both had of the inconveniences and difficulties and confusions which resulted from the then existing system which made us believe that it was of essential importance that a change should be made in it. My Lords, of course a great many matters connected with a question of this kind are not matters which can be introduced in a public discussion; but I think I may, without impropriety, allude to one at all events of the very marked difference in the position in the Government of India towards the Army of Bengal and towards the Armies of the Minor Presidencies. When the expedition was sent to Candahar, after the unfortunate battle of Maiwand, the Government had to select the troops to be sent out. That expedition was ordered by telegraph, and was required to be despatched with the greatest possible rapidity. Accordingly, the troops were put on the march as soon as might be. The names of the officers who were to command the Bengal Brigades were duly submitted to the Government of India by the Commander-in-Chief in India, and I felt it to be my duty as Viceroy to consider and inquire into the position and services of the officers who were so recommended. The Government of India and the Viceroy as representing it were responsible to Parliament and to the public for the appointment of those officers; and, of course, it was our duty to make all the inquiries we could as to their qualifications. But when I came to do the same thing with regard to the Bombay Brigades and asked for exactly the same information with regard to them which had been given to me with respect to the Bengal officers, I found two things — in the first place, that that information did not exist in the Archives of the Government of India in the same way, and to the same extent as it existed with regard to the Bengal officers; and I found also that the Bombay officers had been appointed, before their names had been approved by the Government of India, by the Bombay Government to the command of their brigades, and were on the march towards the scene of action. Of course, under those circumstances, even if I had hesitated with regard to the qualifications of any one of those officers, I could not, unless the case was of the most flagrant description, have exercised the power of controlling the choice which had been made. I merely mention this, my Lords, to show how these questions do affect matters of the gravest importance in connection with an Army in the field. I could go into the practical difficulties with respect to several other matters of military organisation as shown in time of war, but I will not do so; I will merely venture to ask your Lordships to take, my assurance that those difficulties were cropping up almost constantly. Well, my Lords, we sent home those proposals, and they were rejected in July, 1883, partly, perhaps, because we did not make the exact nature of our proposals as clear as we ought to have done, and therefore they were not thoroughly understood; partly because the saving which we thought we should make by them was contested at the India Office—the saving was in itself, I will admit, never supposed to be a large one; and possibly partly from a fear of change and from a want of that experience which we possessed who were actually concerned in the administration of the Indian Army, and who had been so recently engaged in carrying out the operations of war. This part of our proposal, therefore, my Lords, fell to the ground, and there was an end of it for the time. Well, my noble Friend Lord Dufferin succeeded me at the end of 1884. He was in no hurry to deal with this question. Four years elapsed before he wrote his Despatch upon the subject; but in June, 1888, having given to the question, as the time that he took shews, the fullest and the most careful consideration, he again addressed the Government at home on the subject. And, my Lords, you will observe that my noble Friend, like myself, had had actual experience of the operation of this system in time of war, because he had been engaged in the supervision of the military operations which took place in Burma; and if you will turn to his Despatch in the Blue Book on your Lordships' Table you will see that it is a great deal upon the Burmese experience that he rests himself, and it is by facts derived from that experience that he illustrates and defends his recommendations. I hope your Lordships will allow me to give the words of my noble Friend's Despatch, for they are much better than any I could employ myself. They have the full weight of his authority, and they have not merely the authority of Lord Dufferin himself, great as it is, but of the whole of his Government. Lord Dufferin wrote on the 1st June, 1888, to the following effect. He had been alluding to these Burmese difficulties and inconveniences which I have just touched upon, and he goes on:—

> "It will be readily understood how much embarrassment and confusion such a complicated procedure is calculated to bring about. With this experience on record we view with apprehension the possibility of our being called upon at any future time to undertake more extensive military operations, while hampered by so faulty a system which violates all the recognised principles of sound military administration; and we feel that we shall be incurring a grave responsibility if we did not once more place on record our sense of the danger to India of allowing the reform, so strongly advocated by our predecessors, to be postponed any longer. We now, therefore, submit to your Lordship our earnest and deliberate opinion that the time has come when what still remains of the Presidential system should be finally abolished; and the entire administration of all the Indian Armies should be made over to the Commander-in-Chief in India acting in direct communication with the Commanders-in-Chief of the local Armies and under the direct orders of the Government of India."

My Lords, these are very serious words. The opinion expressed there is a very grave one. It is exactly coincident with the opinion which I had myself formed from the experience I had had, and I remember that I used to say when in India that I should be very sorry indeed to be responsible for the conduct of a great war under the system which existed at that time. That view is here fully and entirely confirmed by the opinion expressed by Lord Dufferin and his Government, and it is confirmed by them, as your Lordships will see, after a most prolonged and careful consideration of the whole question. Well, my Lords, when that Despatch of Lord Dufferin arrived in England, what course did the noble Viscount opposite take? He sent a telegram to Lord Dufferin requesting that the Government of India would prepare a General Order upon the subject in full and minute detail. Here are the words—

> "A General Order in draft giving effect to the measure; also drafts of all Orders to be thereon issued by the Commander-in-Chief for all arrangements in minute detail."

My Lords, the Government of India undertook the task, and there is given here in this Blue Book a very long General Order, prepared with the greatest care and in the most minute detail. It occupies the chief part of the Blue Book, and it certainly might have been supposed that after that had been done, the principles upon which that general Order was founded, would have received the sanction of the noble Viscount opposite; but as I shall show your Lordships in a moment, that was not the case. But I wish to strengthen my case yet further by another brief quotation from the opinion of my noble Friend Lord Dufferin, because, with this draft Order, there was sent home a Minute by Lord Dufferin, and in that Minute he thus described the leading principle upon which the draft General Order was founded. Therefore, in saying that the principle which I am advocating is the leading principle of that General Order, I am only repeating what Lord Dufferin said.

> "The leading principle of those proposals was that the Army administration should be so contrived as to permit decentralisation in such military business as was not of the first importance, while the supreme financial and administrative power should remain in the hands of the Governor General in Council, and further that the Commander-in-Chief in India should be placed in command of the whole Army of India, instead of his powers being confined chiefly to the control of the Bengal

Army. In respect of the organisation of the Indian Armies, it is desired to maintain in the most complete manner the separation of the Bengal Army from the Armies of Madras and Bombay;"

and then the Minute refers to the recruitment of Armies in the other parts of Hindostan and in the Punjaub. That is the leading principle upon which that General Order was framed, and it is to that leading principle that I am asking your Lordships' attention to-night. I should perhaps mention here that Lord Dufferin's Government in one minor respect differed from the recommendations of previous Governments. They retained the titles of the Commanders-in-Chief at Madras and Bombay. They did not propose to call them Lieutenants General; they proposed to leave them the title of Commander-in-Chief, although they subordinated them altogether for the purpose of unity of command to the Commander-in-Chief in India. That is a very minor matter. I daresay Lord Dufferin's Government may have been wise in taking that course, and certainly it is not a point on which I should think of raising any difference of opinion. Well, my Lords, this elaborate scheme, prepared at the call of the noble Viscount opposite, was sent home to England, and was, I have not the least doubt, by the time it took, fully considered, by the noble Viscount and his Council; and the result, I regret to say, was that the noble Viscount did not feel himself in a position to accept, at all events at present, this part of the proposal of the Government of India. I will give the words of the noble Viscount in a moment; but he did accept (and in doing so he did much good) a great many of the minor proposals of the Government of India, all tending in the direction of getting rid of this Presidential system. He pulled out more stones; he destroyed the structure still further; he rendered it more liable to fall down than it was before. It was, perhaps, rather an insidious policy on the part of the noble Viscount, and I confess I should have been glad if he had adopted a bolder policy, for I am afraid that the rubbish left behind by the removal of those stones is likely to encumber the administration of the Indian Army for some time to come. What he said was this, in a Despatch to Lord Lansdowne's Government—

> "I regret to have now to inform your Lordship that for the present, at any rate, I find myself unable to enter into the large question of military organisation which has been so ably put forward. I am advised that, in order to give effect to any measure for the withdrawal of the Armies of Madras and Bombay from the control of those Governments, recourse must be had to Imperial legislation. Her Majesty's Government consider that such a course would be highly inexpedient, as it would certainly give rise to discussions, which must cause delay prejudicial to the Public Service, and I cannot deem it advisable to consider the re-construction of the Indian military system on any less comprehensive basis than that advocated by your Government."

My Lords, that might be taken to be a diplomatic mode of saying that the Government did not like to bring a Bill for this purpose into Parliament, and that they thought it would be difficult to pass. I shall have a word to say upon the argument put forward in that form in a moment; but the noble Viscount's language is that the discussions which must arise "would cause delay prejudicial to the Public Service," by which I understand him to mean, that the discussions arising on the passing of such a Bill through Parliament would necessarily take some time, and that during that time every question with regard to this military organisation must stand over. I venture to differ from my noble Friend in that respect. It seems to me that he might not only have done upon his own authority all he has done—that he might have pulled these stones over which he so properly rejoices out of this antiquated structure just the same, but that he might have made a clean sweep of the remaining rubbish by bringing a Bill into Parliament and settling the question once for all upon that basis, which he truly says is the only real basis upon which it can be settled. My Lords, that Despatch was received not by the Government of Lord Dufferin, but by the Government of Lord Lansdowne; and now we arrive at the administration of a fourth Viceroy in connection with this question. And what was the opinion of Lord Lansdowne's Government upon it? Your Lordships will recollect that Lord Lansdowne's Government might, if they had liked, have left that part of the question alone. The decision of the noble Viscount upon it was, so far, final for the time. His other directions related to the remaining matters which I have called the minor points. But so strongly did Lord Lansdowne's Government feel the importance of this question that they would not pass it by—they would not let it alone though they might have done so if they had liked, but they recurred to it again and expressed in the very gravest terms their view of the question. This, again, is the unanimous language of Lord Lansdowne's administration—

> "Four successive Governments of India have thus supported the proposals which were put forward by the Army Organisation Committee 10 years ago. The alterations proposed in the administration of the Army are not merely for the purpose of remedying inconveniences, but to impart a practical and working form to an accidental organisation which, in course of time, has developed into a cumbrous and complicated machinery. We desire, therefore, once again to place before Her Majesty's Government our conviction that it would be a misfortune of the greatest moment if this Amendment of the military administration which we consider to be essential to the efficiency of the Army in this country should not be carried out in the breathing time of peace, which we fortunately now possess, and if the desired change so persistently and impartially advocated by the Governments of India were to be postponed until the disastrous experience of war should force upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of effecting this most necessary reform of the Indian Army System."

My Lords, it is impossible for any Government of India, with the respect which they owe to Her Majesty's Government at home, to use stronger language in regard to any kind of reform than that which I have just read to your Lordships. What, then, is the position in which the matter stands? It is this: you have had four successive Governments of India all combining to recommend this change—perhaps I ought to say, to be strictly correct, four successive Viceroys, because the united opinion of the Indian Government in the case of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty was not recorded on the subject. You have had all those Viceroys supporting this change and three of them unanimously supported by their Colleagues in the Government. I need not remind your Lordships that those four Viceroys were men of very different characters and training. They were men belonging to different political Parties, and I should imagine that we all went there with no preconceived opinion upon this subject. I can say that for myself, and I have no doubt it was the case with my noble Friends. We all went thoroughly into the question; three of us had experience of war as well as peace, and the whole four came to the conclusion that it is a matter of the gravest moment that the administration of the Army in India should be put upon such a footing of unity of command as that which was pressed upon the noble Viscount opposite by those four Governors. My Lords, in these proposals you have had men like Sir Donald Stewart and Sir Frederick Roberts, two successive Commanders-in-Chief fully agreeing, and giving them their most entire and cordial support; and I confess I can hardly conceive a stronger case than this for calling upon Her Majesty's Government to take steps to deal with this question upon, as the noble Lord says, the only satisfactory footing upon which it can be dealt with. My Lords, the English Government in India ought always to be in a state of perfect preparation for war. It has always been my view—and I desire to say that this is no mere view of my own, for I have heard the same opinion expressed by others of greater experience and knowledge of India than myself—that the Army in India ought to be ready to take the field at any moment upon a telegraphic command from the Government of India. You cannot secure that perfect efficiency unless you have a sound system of organisation, and you cannot have a sound system of organisation unless you secure that unity of command which is found to exist in every great military organisation throughout the world. I do, therefore, most earnestly submit to Her Majesty's Government that they are incurring a very grave responsibility in resisting the urgent demands and disregarding the repeated warnings they have received for so long a time. If they had brought in a Bill, and it had failed, then that responsibility would not have rested upon them; it would have rested upon others. But when the noble Viscount opposite practically tells the public not in this country only, but in India, that this great reform spoken of in such very strong language by successive Governments of India cannot be carried out simply because a Bill cannot be passed through Parliament, I do venture to say that I think an argument of that description is one which might be fraught with serious consequences. I do not think it is an argument with which this question should be met; and if the hesitation of Her Majesty's Government to deal with this most important matter rests solely upon that ground, as it appears to do, then I do say that Her Majesty's Government are called upon by a very urgent demand to take this question into their serious consideration and to deal with it in the ensuing Session. Some steps, as I have already said, have been taken by the noble Viscount, and, if he will allow me to say so, I desire to give him every credit for those steps; but the principle, which is a wrong principle, remains, and it remains to obstruct and hamper the Public Service, and to weaken our Military Administration in India. I do, therefore, urge the Government to re-consider the matter and to do their part to give effect to the reiterated proposals of four successive Viceroys who have had practical experience of the working of the present system in peace and in war, and who, differing in a great many other things in regard to Indian questions, have been absolutely unanimous in saying that the present system is one which they would regard with the greatest alarm if it were in existence at a time of serious peril.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): My Lords, I am not at all sorry to have heard from the noble Marquess the speech which he has addressed to your Lordships' House. I am quite aware that this is a matter which has engaged the attention of the successive Governments of India for a long time past, and that not only the noble Marquess, but other Viceroys have taken the same view: that Lord Dufferin felt the necessity for a change very strongly, and that Lord Lansdowne is undoubtedly of the same opinion. Now, the noble Marquess said that when the matter was first considered by him, he and his Government very properly took a great amount of trouble to investigate for themselves before they ventured to address the Government at home upon this particular subject, and that in a Despatch which they sent home they went fully into the matter and put forward every argument they could use in order to further their views. Now, I should like to consider for a moment how that Despatch was received by the Government of the day. The noble Lord (the Earl of Kimberley), who sits next to the noble Marquess, was at the India Office at that time, and it fell to his lot to frame the Despatch which was to answer this pressing demand of the Indian Government. The noble Earl went very fully into the matter, and he alleged certain reasons why he did not feel inclined to accept the decision of the Government of India upon this point. I should like to read to the House one or two sentences from that Despatch to show, at all events, how the matter was viewed at that time by the Government of the day when the noble Earl was Secretary of State for India. The passage is at paragraph 37 of the Despatch where Lord Kimberley was alluding to the weight of authority for and against the change. I do not think the noble Marquess made quite enough of that particular point. He says—

> "There is no doubt that the Military Authorities in this country, as well as in India, have been very much divided upon this point; and although it is perfectly true that four successive Viceroys have pressed the Government at home to take the course proposed, it is equally true that there is a very strong weight of authority on the other side among military men."

That, no doubt, was felt by the noble Earl to be the case when he penned this Despatch from which I am reading a few words. He gives certain names of people as being strongly opposed to this particular plan, and then he says—

> "I mention these names, not as outweighing those of others who support the scheme, but in order to show that I could not press the measure on Parliament on the ground that there is a general agreement in favour of the scheme on the part of military and administrative officers who have been consulted, but that, on the contrary, I should have to say there is a considerable body of experienced opinion opposed to it. This opinion, I should say, is shared by the majority of those Indian officers of military experience who have been consulted in this country."

Therefore, the noble Marquess must not take it that all the opinion is in his direction; quite the reverse; because when the noble Earl came to discuss the question with his military advisers here (and Sir

Donald Stewart was one of them at the time if I am not mistaken) he found that the great weight of military authority was against the noble Marquess instead of in his favour. The Earl of Kimberley's Despatch goes on at paragraph 53—

> "On the whole, I have come to the conclusion, for the reasons I have explained, that it is not expedient to ask Parliament to legislate for the purpose of giving effect to your recommendation."

He was not afraid of a Bill not passing, but that it was inexpedient to present one—

> "Your Lordships will, I am sure, understand that it is with much regret that Her Majesty's Government find themselves unable to adopt a measure which all the Members of your Government support; but looking to the direction of military opinion upon the question, to the political objections which may be urged to the proposed changes in the constitution of the Madras and Bombay Armies, and the absence of proof of financial saving, they do not find such a weight of authority in its favour as would justify them in recommending to Parliament such an extensive and fundamental change in the existing military system."

The Despatch which the noble Marquess had sent home, and which had been, as he has told us, so carefully prepared, was clearly also very carefully considered by the Government of which the noble Earl was a member; and after weighing every consideration and argument that could be urged by the noble Marquess in favour of his proposition they were prepared upon their own judgment to decline to adopt the proposal, and they came to the conclusion that it was not expedient to ask Parliament to make this fundamental change which the noble Marquess pressed upon them to make. So the matter ended; the Government of the day went out; and I think the next time the matter was pressed upon the English Government was when Lord Randolph Churchill was in office. He had to consider the question with his military advisers, and he came to the conclusion it was not expedient to bring a Bill into Parliament on the subject, that it would require a Bill, and there was no time at that period of the year for it. It was on that ground, I believe, that he objected to taking any step. He stated in his Despatch of the 29th October, 1885—

> "It could not be carried out without an Act of Parliament being passed to give effect to it. Under existing circumstances such a course would be, for the present at any rate, altogether impracticable, and need not, therefore, be taken into consideration."

Then the next Despatch which came from India on the matter was one addressed to myself. I also went very thoroughly into it, and I certainly consulted all the Military Authorities I could upon the point. No one was more strongly against the proposal than the illustrious Duke, the Commander-in-Chief in England; and certainly no one ever wrote to me more strongly against the proposal than the late Lord Napier of Magdala. He was opposed to it very strongly indeed. That, in my opinion, strengthened very much the view which my noble Friend the Earl of Kimberley had taken, that as all the Military Authorities were certainly not on one side on the subject, we should have to move with considerable caution in regard to it. Having satisfied myself that an Act of Parliament was absolutely necessary, if the measure was to be carried out, and having satisfied myself that if I brought it into this House I should have been opposed by such very good authorities as I have already mentioned, I did not think there was much chance of a Bill of that kind, in the present state of public opinion, and of military opinion, passing through Parliament. Therefore, I had to consider what was the best thing to be done. I did not like to delay the other reforms, which I thought were so very useful and desirable. I did not think even if a Bill could be brought in it would be wise to attempt to carry out this particular measure; at the same time I thought I would cast about to see whether, with the assistance of my noble Friend, I could not carry out a certain amount of reform which would remove a great many of the difficulties the noble Marquess has alluded to, and which the Commander-in-Chief in India said stood in his way in approaching this matter. I will take the opportunity of saying that I am glad the noble Marquess approves of these reforms, such as they are. They all had a tendency and were in the direction of lessening the Presidential system, and they are certainly in the way of giving much greater power to the Commander-in-Chief without centralisation. The Military Accounts had already been dealt with, but we dealt with a great many more matters, and we put the Commissariat, the Transport, the Clothing Department, and the Military Works all entirely under the Commander-in-Chief; so that I think we have gone a long way towards removing a great many of the difficulties which, no doubt, the Commander-in-Chief did feel were pressing upon his position. Now, my Lords, I am not at all saying that this matter of what remains of the Presidential commands is not a question which really does not want great consideration, as my noble Friend says. I quite agree with that, and I think that very likely the Debate which the noble Marquess has initiated to-night may call the attention of military persons still more to this matter than has been the case hitherto, so that we shall be able to get further judgments upon the matter. But, my Lords, I think the divergence of authorities I have cited is quite enough to warrant any Government in saying you must be quite certain you are right before you take this revolutionary step; but when you have made up your mind that it should be taken, take it by all means. I must confess that I think the Government of India, in the last Despatch they wrote upon the matter, placed their case a little too high. I think they put it a little too strongly, because I do not think they would or could, under the system which goes on, now feel the disadvantages to which the noble Marquess had formerly alluded. For the moment, supposing there was a great war, the Commander-in-Chief in India knows perfectly well that the whole of the Army that was engaged would be practically placed under his command. The Army in Burmah is placed under his command. If the point is taken that he would be in difficulties, owing to not having the powers which he wanted for other purposes, the reforms I have already inaugurated would practically do away with the other mischiefs which the noble Marquess alluded to in his Despatch; and, therefore, although I cannot promise that Her Majesty's Government will bring in a Bill to effect this purpose, I can inform him that the whole matter is still under the consideration of the Secretary of State in communication with the Government of India, not simply in reference to this matter of the Presidential commands, but to other matters connected with the different regiments belonging to those Armies. But one thing I think I may lay down without contradiction—that is, that it would never do to be continually tampering with these Armies. I think when any reform is resolved upon there ought to be something like, if not finality, settlement for a time about it. I do not mean mere financial reforms. But when you have made up your mind to carry out substantial reforms, do let them be fixed, at all events, for some time to come. It is not fair to keep the Army of India unsettled and uncertain as to what its future is to be. When this step is taken it ought to be taken after due consideration, and when we have obtained a greater consensus of military opinion upon the subject than up to the present moment we have had.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I am very glad my noble Friend behind me has brought this very important subject before the House, because I quite agree with him that there is, perhaps, no more important question connected with Indian administration than that which has been raised. The noble Viscount has referred to the decision which was given by the India Office at the time when I had the honour to hold the position of Secretary of State for India, and he has quoted what, I think, are certainly two most material passages in my Despatch then written. My Lords, I quite agree with my noble Friend behind me as to the grave responsibility which attaches to any one who has to deal with this subject, and I do not know that I ever felt a greater responsibility than in coming to the decision at which I arrived. It certainly was not come to by the Government to which I belonged with any precipitation, because my noble Friend Lord Hartington, who preceded me, found the question one of such doubt and difficulty that he did not deal with it while he was Secretary for India, and it fell to my lot to give that decision. Now, I cannot agree with my noble Friend in assuming that there is only one side to this question. It seems to me that it is essentially a matter in which you have to balance very different considerations. My own opinion, of course, upon a military subject is absolutely worthless, but I came to my conclusion after a very careful consideration and study of the military points in consultation with the Military Authorities, to whom I had access, India, in regard to such a matter, is not to be dealt with without reference to her peculiar circumstances. There is not the slightest doubt that in a European country, where the population is homogeneous and not in the peculiar circumstances which are connected with India, it would be the best plan to have a central military administration and one supreme command. I do not suppose anyone out of India, who has not a knowledge of that country, would have thought such a system could have grown up as exists there. But that system, as it has grown up, has adapted itself to the circumstances of the case. I shall presently consider how far some of those circumstances have altered. The question is not merely a military one, it is also a political question; and if you put out of sight the political question, and deal with the subject only from a military point of view, I do not think you can justify the decision you may arrive at, whichever way you may look at it, from the merely military aspect. The political aspect of the question is alluded to in my Despatch in a very short passage, which I may, perhaps, be allowed to read to your Lordships. It is to this effect. In paragraph 49 of my Despatch, I say—

> "In confining my remarks to a few points only of that part of the question, I beg your Lordships to consider that it is from no desire to under-rate your arguments in favour of the scheme, but even if their validity were admitted, they would not, in my opinion, be sufficient to outweigh the considerations with regard to the political situation of Madras and Bombay with their Armies, enabling them, in any unforeseen contingency, to act by themselves, without reference to the Central Government."

I apprehend that paragraph contains really the gist of the arguments on the other side. I had the benefit of excellent military advice when I was at the India Office. The Chief Military Adviser of the Indian Council at the time was that able and distinguished man—Sir Henry Norman, and Sir Henry Norman had an extremely strong opinion against the scheme. I consulted, as the noble Viscount has mentioned, all the Military Authorities who I thought could give an opinion of any weight, and I arrived at the singular result that there was, it might almost be said, an equal opinion on both sides, though, perhaps, the majority, as I stated in my Despatch, were against the scheme. Then the noble Viscount stated very fairly the difficulty I felt in going to Parliament under those circumstances, because I could, of course, adduce no authority of my own upon a military question, and I should have been obliged to show Parliament that there was sufficient military authority for the change proposed. I was very well aware that there were many eminent and able men in favour of the scheme. At that time you had Sir Donald Stewart, a man of great experience, and now you have Sir Frederick Roberts, whose opinion is second to none. So much from the military point of view. But, my Lords, the political aspect of the question is one which cannot be lightly put aside. It may have been that Sir Henry Norman, and those who advised me, were too much impressed with their recollections of what had occurred during the mutiny, and may have given too much consideration to the circumstances which arose during the occurrences of that perilous time. But although it may be possible that no such great crisis will ever arise again you never can be certain in a great Empire such as India that you may not have internal troubles to deal with which might greatly embarrass you if the local armies could not act separately. There is, moreover, the consideration of the very great difference between the populations from which the Madras Army is entirely recruited and from which the Bombay Army is partially raised, because it is quite true, as my noble Friend has stated, that a considerable number, and more than Government approve of, Pathans and others not natives of the Bombay Presidency, are recruited in the Bombay Army. There is no doubt that the Central Government in India being placed at Calcutta at so great a distance from Bombay and Madras would not be so completely in touch with the Armies there as the Local Governments. That might formerly have been a serious source of danger, but I admit that the greatly improved communication which we now have in India, both by railway and telegraph, has considerably weakened the force of that argument. My Lords, I came to the conclusion, with great reluctance and hesitation, that I could not advise Her Majesty's Government to go to Parliament with a Bill. I say that because I felt strongly the responsibility of the position. Lord Lytton, and most of the Members of his Government, and also my noble Friend and his Government, had made strong recommendations on the subject; but, as I have said, I conscientiously believed I had not such a case as would have justified me at that time in proposing to Parliament the change which the Government of India desired. Now, let us see how the matter stands at the present time. It is, undoubtedly, a strong fact that the same opinions have been expressed by two more Viceroys, so able and experienced as Lord Dufferin and Lord Lansdowne, one, after four years of administration himself, having also been connected with the War Office at home, and another, at present in office in India, also with experience himself of military administration. I say, my Lords, it is a very grave fact that they have recorded in the strongest language their opinion that the Government at home will incur the very gravest resposibility if they neglect to carry into effect this reform. And besides that, there are certain arguments in these Despatches presenting new considerations which were not so pressing, or did not exist at the time when at the India Office I had to deal with the matter. There cannot be the least doubt, as I think Lord Dufferin's Government point out, that there have been two changes which very much affect this question—one, the new condition of affairs upon the frontiers of Beloochistan and Afghanistan, and the other, our acquisition of the whole of Burmah. The first is, perhaps, of the widest and most serious significance. We have now occupied a very advanced position in Beloochistan, we have a railway passing through the Khoja Ranges, in what was formerly part of Afghanistan; and we have created at Quetta a first class military station, which has now become one of the most important military positions of our Indian Empire. It is, of course, essential, from an Imperial point of view, also that this position should be entirely under the control of the Supreme Government as regards the troops stationed there, and yet it may be that the whole of the native troops stationed there are from the Bombay Army, and if that Army were to remain under the Local Government great inconvenience may arise. We must consider the very great change which has taken place as regards the general military position in India. Formerly we had to provide almost entirely for internal dangers. Now, unfortunately, although affairs happily wear a peaceful aspect at the present time we are obliged to admit that we have upon our frontier a great Power with whom we may one day have to deal. Therefore, the chief military question which the Indian Government have to deal with is the defence of our frontier. For the defence of such a frontier, more especially if we should have to defend it against a European Power, it is of the utmost importance that the administration should be concentrated in the Indian Central Government. My Lords, it seems to me that is an argument which must be set strongly against the argument put forward on the other side, which I admit is one of considerable weight as connected with the internal management of affairs in India. Then, with regard to Burmah. That is now a very large possession. It is garrisoned by the Madras Army. About half the Madras Army is in Burmah, and your Lordships can easily see how inconvenient it would be that that large force should be under the orders of the Local Government at Madras, and not under the control of the Supreme Government.

*VISCOUNT CROSS: It was under the control of the Supreme Government.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Well, my Lords, although it may be under the control of the Supreme Government for the time, as it must undoubtedly be, it is shown by the Government of India in the Despatches on the Table that there is considerable administrative inconvenience in the present arrangement. Then, as regards the minor reforms. I did something in that direction, but I am glad to say that the noble Viscount has gone farther. That part of the question probably has been carried as far as it can be carried, and it is the great question of the separate armies that remains to be considered. I appreciate very strongly the way in which both Lord Dufferin's Government and Lord Lonsdale's Government have alluded to the importance of maintaining segregation as they have called in the different Armies. That shows, I think, that as far as it can be done they will be kept separate; but your Lordships must not suppose that the mere wish on the part of the Government to keep up this separation is sufficient. Once you have a central control of the whole of the Armies at Calcutta, I feel perfectly convinced that the centralisation principle will overcome the Local Government principle in regard to administration, and, whatever may be the opinion of the Government, military administration in India will necessarily, year by year, take a more centralised character. Therefore, although I acknowledge the justness of the views of the Indian Government with regard to segregation, I think we must set against it the natural tendency to increased central control. I wish the noble Viscount had given us the Despatch of Lord Randolph Churchill. I do not think it contains much that is of very great importance, but it should have been given to your Lordships as part of the history. To sum up the whole matter, I freely confess that in the face of the opinions of, now, four successive Viceroys, extending over a period of 10 years, opinions expressed in the most uncompromising and strongest manner, I feel that I should, if I had to deal with the question now, have great hesitation in refusing to give effect to their recommendations, and in persevering in the conclusion at which I formerly arrived. It is a very serious responsibility that we should in this matter neglect the opinions of such experienced men, men on the spot who have necessarily a closer and more complete acquaintance with all the surrounding circumstances than we can have. I must also say that from the military point of view, I think the recent experience of Sir Donald Stewart and of Sir Frederick Roberts ought to have great weight with us. I feel bound, therefore, to say, having expressed an adverse opinion before, that if Her Majesty's Government should come to the conclusion that the time has arrived at which they can present a Bill to Parliament for carrying this change into effect it would meet with no opposition from me.

*THE EARL OF **NORTHBROOK**: My Lords, upon this subject I wish to offer a few remarks, though it is not one which ever came before me officially, but, of course, I have naturally paid great attention to the Despatches received from India, and especially to the Blue Book which has been laid upon the Table of your Lordships' House. The difficulty of this subject cannot be more clearly set forth than in mentioning the fact that four successive Viceroys, Lord Lytton, the Marquess of Ripon, Lord Dufferin, and Lord Lansdowne, have advocated this change, and that four Secretaries of State for India, Lord Hartington, Lord Kimberley, Lord Randolph Churchill, and the noble Viscount opposite, Lord Cross, have found themselves unable, after full consideration with all the desire which they would naturally have felt to support the recommendations of the Viceroys, to give effect to the wishes of the Indian Government. My Lords, I think I may, as having been myself Viceroy, say one thing without risk of offending my noble Friends who have also filled that office, namely, that when a scheme has been deliberately set forth and advocated by the Government of India, when the men who have framed that scheme had the ear of the Viceroy, it is exceedingly difficult to go back from a scheme which has also received the assent of other Viceroys of India; and I think there must have been some influence insensibly exercised over my noble Friends by the naturally strong feeling of the Military Departments in India in favour of greater centralisation of the Armies in India. My Lords, I am very much in the same condition of mind as my noble Friend (Lord Kimberley) who has just addressed your Lordships. He has just stated, with great clearness and ability, and with perfect frankness, the difficulties of the situation, and I should, undoubtedly, with him be disposed to support the views of the Government of India in this matter, but with one important reservation, namely, that I must confess that the Papers, as presented to your Lordships, containing the scheme are not to my mind sufficiently satisfactory to justify the Government in acting. Now, my Lords, that is the practical question before the Government at the present time. The objections to centralisation have been so fully expressed by my noble Friend who last addressed your Lordships that I will not repeat them at length. One great advantage at present is that too great a centralisation of the military administration in the Commander-in-Chief is prevented! My noble Friend Lord Kimberley has frankly admitted that if this scheme is to be accepted it must be assumed that centralisation will take place. I have to represent to your Lordships that, in my humble opinion, that would constitute a very serious danger. Those who have studied the events of the Indian Mutiny must be aware that one of the main causes of the want of discipline in the Bengal Army was the centralisation which existed in the office of the Adjutant-General of the Army in India, and the taking away from the officers commanding regiments the powers they had over their men. I am not for a moment suggesting that my gallant Friend, Sir Frederick Roberts, is likely to fall into an error of that kind; but I do suggest to your Lordships, and I believe it is only common sense, that very able men put into positions of great executive responsibility are apt to think that they alone can act rightly, and to desire to diminish the responsibility of those serving under them. If this plan is carried out it appears to me that every precaution should be taken against such a result as that. I do not find in this very able collection of General Orders, extending over I do not know how many pages, which has been sent home from India, and which I think the noble Lord was quite right in asking for, anything clear upon this matter. I find, on the contrary, some suggestions for Orders which, to my mind, would rather tend to centralisation, than to deter the Commander-in-Chief's office in India from centralising the business of the local Armies. For example, I find in some of these draft General Orders that the approval of the appointment of officers commanding native regiments in the Armies of Madras and Bengal is to rest with the Commander-in-Chief in India. That does not appear to me to be at all necessary. I find, also, on looking at the correspondence which has been laid on your Lordships' Table, a very clear indication of the view taken at present in the office of the Commander-in-Chief in India, that a great part of the detail work connected with the local Armies would have to be sent up to Calcutta. I find, at pages 230-236, that Colonel Harris, the officiating Adjutant-General of India, writes to the Chief of the Military Department—

> "That the Commander-in-Chief would undertake the larger matters of discipline, equipment, and other matters in Madras and Bombay, which are now dealt with by the Commanders-in-Chief and the Governments of those Presidencies."

No words can be larger than those. If that proposal is accepted, the Commander-in-Chief in India would be able to deal with anything connected with the Armies of Madras and Bombay. The answer given by the Government of India was, I venture to think, a very right one. The reply sent to that letter was that—

> "The Government of India consider that it is desirable to leave to the local Commanders-in-Chief the fullest responsibility and authority in regard to the discipline of their Armies."

The opinion of the Government of India appears to me to be absolutely sound in this matter; and they went on to say that if sufficient power was left to the local Commanders-in-Chief, hardly any new matters need be sent for the consideration of the Commander-in-Chief at Calcutta. My Lords, the opinion of the Government of India I hold to be the right one in this matter, but I think this correspondence shows that there is even now, some vagueness, some failure to make it quite clear, that for all purposes of discipline and minor administration, the powers exercised by the officers in command of the Madras and Bombay Armies should not be interfered with by the Adjutant-General's Office of the Commander-in-Chief in India. Now, my Lords, the opinions expressed by my noble Friends Lord Ripon and Lord Dufferin appear to me to be as sound and practical as can possibly be. The words used by Lord Dufferin I especially venture to express my entire agreement with, namely—

> "That the decentralisation of military business, and the delegation of powers to the Commanders of Military Forces, is the principle to be aimed at."

But I say that further consideration requires to be given to this question, and I am glad to hear that the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross) intends to give that further consideration to it. My Lords, the other point mentioned by my noble Friend Kimberley, as to which I would like to say a word, is the very important consideration as to the possibility of Bombay or Madras being separated from Calcutta. If this scheme is carried out without some provision being made for such a contingency as that, I should like my noble Friend the Secretary of State for India to consider what the legal effect of the alterations proposed by the Government of India in the Army Act would be. What action could the Governments either of Madras or Bombay take in respect to military procedure, supposing that the Army Act was amended in the manner proposed, and all power whatever taken away from the Governments of Madras and Bombay over the Armies of those Presidencies? There is not one of your Lordships who has paid attention to the subject who is not aware of the great advantage to the Public Service which was rendered by Lord Elphinstone, when Governor of Bombay, at the time of the Indian Mutiny; and I venture to suggest that, even if this separation be made, at least some kind of legislative provision should be introduced, enabling, in a time of difficulty or crisis, either the Government of India or the Government at home to give certain authority to the Madras and Bombay Governments, if necessity should arise. Those two instances, my Lords, may, perhaps, to a certain extent enable your Lordships to understand how full of difficulties this question may be. No doubt, looked upon as a question of military administration, the thing is clear enough. Unity of command, unity of administration—are principles which have guided, no doubt, the Commander-in-Chief in India in the suggestions he has made. But I agree with my noble Friend, Lord Kimberley, that this is a matter which requires to be considered upon broad political grounds, and not upon military grounds alone, and I consider that the former Secretaries of State, who have filled that office for the last 10 years, and the noble Viscount opposite who fills it now, have only done their duty in declining to carry out this measure without a more full and complete consideration of all the different aspects of the subject, and of the precise manner in which the proposal is to be put in force. In conclusion, my Lords, I venture to think it would not be right of my noble Friend the Secretary of State for India to put the responsibility of settling this question upon Parliament. It is a matter which, I think, rests with the Government, and that the Government should be entirely satisfied with the nature of the scheme they have to propose to Parliament and be able to support it by completely and fully answering the military or political objection to it before they present a measure to Parliament.

*THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE: My Lords, I may be permitted to say a few words though, personally, I feel that I can say much less than the distinguished Members of this House who have already spoken; but I have had opportunities of hearing and judging of the opinion of some of the leading military men in India, and as already the names of two of them, at all events, have been referred to, and their opinions quoted, I can fully endorse every word that has been said by the noble Lord Earl Kimberley, when he expressed his anxiety, on a military subject, not to go against the opinion or against the advice of such distinguished men as Sir Henry Norman and the late Lord Napier of Magdala. I have had numerous conversations, constant conversations with those two distinguished officers, and others—I could name others, but perhaps those two names will suffice. Those distinguished officers, and many others, have all said to me that it would be a most ticklish and delicate thing to interfere with the present arrangements of the three military commands in India, and though, in many respects, centralisation or united command is advantageous, that the disadvantages of change would be so great that they hoped they would not be incurred. Now, I believe Her Majesty's Government has certainly given many Orders lately, or given sanction to many measures which have very much simplified the military requirements in India, and so long as those military requirements can be fulfilled without any organic changes being made, I should strongly urge your Lordships to be very careful and very delicate in introducing any very great alteration, such as that of doing away with the two minor Presidential Armies and combining them with that of Bengal. I am perfectly aware that there is a strong sentiment on the subject in India, and that some people there are desirous of this change, but I do not think, and I am very glad to hear what the noble Lord who has just spoken has said upon that point, that it would be possible now that our administration in India has become so vast, for one man and his surroundings to carry on the work. The duties of the military administration of so vast an Empire are enormous. I regret I was not able to be present when my noble Friend the Marquess of Ripon who has brought this subject forward spoke, but I was detained in another place. I trust your Lordships will forgive me, feeling my own inexperience in Indian matters, for having quoted the opinions and stated the views of men in whom I am sure every member of your Lordships' House has as much confidence as I have myself. I would strongly urge the Government to be most careful in making any alterations in the direction of doing away with the two minor commands.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, June 27, 1890.

CHARGE AGAINST AN INDIAN POLICE OFFICIAL.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if his attention has been called to the statement that an Indian Police Official, in the execution of a warrant for the arrest of a Moughyr banker named Indranarain Saho, used improper methods of search towards members of the banker's family; and whether he will institute an inquiry into the matter?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No, Sir; the Secretary of State has received no information of any such incident.

SIR T. ESMONDE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will have an inquiry made?

*SIR J. GORST: The question of the hon. Member is somewhat indefinite. There are many thousands of police in India, and the question does not even give a reference to the district in which the incident occurred. I am afraid, therefore, that it would be exceedingly difficult to cause an inquiry to be made with any satisfactory result.

SIR T. ESMONDE: I will repeat the question. I am afraid that it may have been put down wrong.

PETITIONS OF EAST INDIAN SUBJECTS.

MR. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the hon. Baronet the Member for Walsall (Mr. C. Forster), as Chairman of the Committee on Public Petitions, whether, in the case of Indian Petitions signed in the Devanágari or Urdu characters, any means exist whereby the Committee can form an opinion as to the genuineness of such signatures; or whether it is the case that, by some custom or Standing Order made in previous years, the Petitions of East Indian subjects are exempt from the scrutiny to which ordinary Petitions are exposed?

SIR C. FORSTER (Walsall): In answer to the question of the hon. Member, I have to state that there are no means of testing the genuineness of signatures signed in native characters to Indian Petitions. I may remind the House, as bearing upon the question, that in the Session of 1881 the Committee on Public Petitions were ordered to print Petitions, even if informal, which, in the opinion of the Committee, bore upon Indian subjects.

LORD REAY AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, with reference to the statements made in India and here respecting Lord Reay's offer to resign the office of Governor of Bombay, it is the fact that, although Lord Reay did not tender his resignation to the Secretary of State for India, he did make a communication to the Viceroy on the subject?

*Sir J. GORST: The statement which I was instructed by the Secretary of State to make in this House on the 8th of May, that Lord Reay never tendered his resignation of the government of Bombay, was correct; but the Secretary of State has been unofficially informed that Lord Reay, by a secret and confidential telegram, the text of which was not communicated to the Secretary of State, intimated to the Viceroy that he would resign in the event of the mamlutdars being dismissed; and my noble Friend has been further unofficially informed that the Viceroy succeeded in dissuading Lord Reay from tendering his resignation.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): After that grave statement will the right hon. Gentleman still refuse to afford facilities for the discussion of the question?

Mr. J. GORST: I must ask for notice of that question.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the leader of the House whether, after the very grave statement that Lord Reay felt it his duty to make a communication to the Viceroy almost equivalent to a tender of his resignation, the Government will not afford the means of having the question raised in this House?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I will consider the matter; but I am sorry to say that the opportunities I have of affording facilities for discussion are very slight indeed.

CRIMEAN VETERANS.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I had intended to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the necessitous circumstances of many of the veterans who served in the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny; and whether he can now promise any measures for their relief? but, at the request of the right hon. Gentleman I will postpone the question until Monday.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: To what day does the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury propose to postpone the Indian Councils Bill?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Monday next.

Monday, June 30, 1890.

SALE OF INTOXICATING DRINK IN INDIA.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to a proposal on the part of the Indian Government to establish an outstill for the sale of intoxicating drink on a tea plantation in the Western Dooars; whether he has read the protest of the owners of the plantation, Messrs. Octavius Steel & Co., dated Calcutta, 30th April, 1890, in which they state—

> "That nothing has so retarded the progress of the district as the spendthrift and degraded habits directly due, as we believe, to the facilities forced on the people for the obtaining of liquor from Government stills;"

whether, despite this protest, a requisition has been made from the Revenue Department for a piece of ground measuring about six acres, "for the purpose of an outstill and a Government market;" and whether, considering the vote of censure passed by the House of Commons last year on the Government of India for stimulating drunkenness by developing the outstill system, the Secretary of State for India will intimate his disapproval of this fresh attempt to force outstill on a reluctant population?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The attention of the Secretary of State was called to the subject some time ago by the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church of Scotland, and he has since been furnished by the hon. Member with a copy of the letter of protest. The Secretary of State is not aware whether a still has been, or will be, established. The matter has been referred to the Government of India for Report.

CRIMEAN AND INDIAN VETERANS.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I had intended to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the necessitous circumstances of many of the veterans who served in the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny; and whether he can now promise any measures for their relief? but, at the request of the right hon. Gentleman, I beg to postpone the question until Monday next.

Thursday, July 3, 1890.

INDIAN STAMPS.

MR. R. POWER (Waterford): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has any objection to lay upon the Table of the House any applications which, during the course of the past 18 months, have been forwarded to the Lords of the Treasury by Mr. J. S. Purcell, C.B., the Controller of Stamps, on the subject of the remuneration paid him for controlling the manufacture of Indian stamps and stamped papers, together with any Reports addressed to their Lordships by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue relative thereto, and any replies to the same which have been sent from the Treasury to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue or to Mr. Purcell; and whether a further appeal from Mr. Purcell, dated the 21st April last, has been received at the Treasury; and, if so, whether any reply has been made thereto?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): It would be very unusual to lay on the Table the correspondence which may have passed between different Departments of the Government. There are very strong objections to such a course. The matter is now under consideration, and, of course, a reply will be made to the further appeal of Mr. Purcell.

NATIVE INDIAN SIGNALLERS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, in view of his statement that the native Indian signallers have never been entitled to house allowance in lieu of accommodation in a telegraph building, he will make inquiries from India as to whether it is a fact that such allowance has been made to the signallers, both European and Indian, and for what period; and whether the Secretary of State will give instructions that where identical duties are performed by officers of the Department, and where no social or religious customs forbid occupancy of quarters in the telegraph building, equality of treatment shall be accorded European and Indian Officials alike?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has satisfied himself by reference to the best authority that no such allowance has ever been made and no further inquiry seems to be necessary. Equality of treatment has always been, and always will be, accorded to European and Indian officials alike.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Upon that statement I will supply the right hon. Gentleman with a list showing the cases in which there has been a difference.

MORTALITY IN THE ASSAM TEA GARDENS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to a statement made by Doaraka Nath Ganguli, Assistant Secretary to the Indian Association at Calcutta, in reference to the excessive mortality on the tea plantations in Assam, wherein he states that the rate per thousand of deaths among Act labourers was in 1883, 61·5; 1884, 58·9; 1885, 51·5; 1886, 58·9; 1887, 57·2; 1888, 62·9.

> "The Report of the year 1888 is the latest one yet received, and it does not show that, so far as the percentage of death is concerned, there has been any progress except in the downward direction.
>
> "In 1888 there were two gardens, in one of which the rate of mortality was 301·6 and in the other 309·5",

and whether he will call the attention of the Indian Government to this high rate of mortality, with a view to their seeing that the provisions of the Act for the protection of coolies is thoroughly enforced?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I also wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether of late years any tea gardens in Assam have been closed by Government, as respects indentured labourers, under the powers provided by the law when the mortality has been excessive; and if not, why, having regard to the very excessive mortality in some gardens, the law has not been enforced as it was in former years?

SIR J. GORST : Yes, Sir; the rates of mortality given in the question of the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) are correct per thousand. The mortality in the tea gardens has been engaging the attention of the Secretary of State and the Government of India ceaselessly for years past, and, as I have on several occasions stated to the House, a special investigation is going on now. In reply to the question of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell), I have to say that no tea gardens have been closed since the year 1884, because, in the opinion of the Sanitary officers, the remedial measures which have been enforced were more efficacious than closure.

SIR G. CAMPBELL : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that either by law or regulation it has been the invariable practice to close these gardens when the mortality has exceeded 100 in the 1,000, and the right hon. Gentleman has admitted that in 1888 there were two cases in which the mortality was upwards of 300 per 1,000?

SIR J. GORST : I believe it used to be the case to shut up the gardens when the mortality rose to a certain amount; but now, under new sanitary arrangements, instead of shutting them up, preventive sanitary measures are prescribed and enforced.

MAMLATDAR WITNESSES AND THE CRAWFORD CASE.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the protest of the civilians of the Bombay Presidency against the treatment of the Mamlatdar witnesses in the Crawford case, and especially to the strong language of Mr. Propert, a British official of 35 years' standing in India, wherein he condemns the breach of faith as fatal to the prestige of the British name; and whether the Government will give an opportunity for a full discussion of this question, so vitally connected with the reputation for good faith of the British Government in India?

SIR J. GORST : Yes, Sir; and the strong language used by Mr. Propert will be found in Parliamentary Paper No. 131 presented this Session. The Secretary of State has no objection to the fullest discussion of the conduct of Her Majesty's Government in requiring the removal of officers who have been guilty of corruption from the position of Judges.

THE INDIAN MIDLAND RAILWAY.

MR. BRADLAUGH : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware of the grievances under which certain chiefs of Bundelkund, Central India, are suffering in connection with the construction of the Indian Midland Railway; whether the Secretary to the Government of India, Public Courts Department, in Order No. 272, R. C., dated 7th of April, 1886, referring to this railway, said—

> "The Government of India is willing to award compensation for such lands as were taken up from the several Durbars for a temporary purpose, and now occupied permanently;"

whether on the 12th of April, 1886, instructions were issued by the Political Agent in Bundelkund to the States of Orchha, Dultia, Khaniadana, and Sampthau, to make over certain specified lands "for permanent occupation" by the Indian Midland Railway, on the express understanding that "full compensation will be given to everyone by the aforesaid company"; whether, when the time came for the settlement of the respective claims, Mr. Henvey, the Agent to the Governor General in Central India, declared that though the railway was for the time in the hands of a company, it should be considered a State Railway; whether Mr. Henvey's orders concluded in these words—

> "I am pleased to rule, without the least hesitation, that no claims from any of the chiefs for compensation of any kind should be admitted;"

and whether he will call the attention of the Government of India to the engagements entered into in April 1886, with a view to the withdrawal of the order of Mr. Henvey, and to the payment of the compensation promised, a sum in all of more than five lakhs of rupees?

SIR J. GORST : No representations have been made to the Secretary of State by the chiefs of Bundelkund of any grievances in connection with the construction of the Indian Midland Railway. If such representations were made, they would, of course, be carefully inquired into and considered. The words of the Government of India referred to in paragraph 2 of the question are incorrectly quoted. They should be—

"The Government of India accept the principle of paying compensation for land which has up to date been taken up temporarily under Class B."

They did not refer to all land taken up; they had reference only to the State of Orchha.

THE MAHARAJAH OF KASHMIR.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the refusal of the Secretary of State for India to order any open inquiry into, or to give any opportunity to the Maharajah of Kashmir to be heard against, the allegations of crime, misconduct, and misgovernment, under cover of which the Maharajah has been deprived of his authority and revenues as a reigning feudatory Prince; and whether the Government will consent to the appointment of a Select Committee of this House to inquire into this case?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Maharajah of Kashmir has been required to withdraw for a time from active participation in the Government of his State—not in consequence of allegations of crime and misconduct, but because the reforms urgently required in the interest of the people of Kashmir cannot be carried out without his so doing. No Select Committee could, with advantage to the Public Service, inquire into the case.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: In consequence of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman I beg to give notice that on the conclusion of questions I shall ask leave to move the adjournment of the House.

MAHARAJAH OF KASHMIR—TREATMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

(4.55.) Mr. BRADLAUGH, Member for the Borough of Northampton, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House, for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz.—

"The taking away by the Government of India from the Maharajah of Kashmir of the Government of his State and part of his Revenues, whilst refusing to allow any judicial or Parliamentary inquiry into the grounds for such action against a great feudatory Prince."

But the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. SPEAKER called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen,

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I am obliged to move the adjournment of the House, because it is the only possible way in which any appeal for the Maharajah of Kashmir can be submitted to Parliament. The Government of India have deprived this Chief of his authority and of his property under cover of allegations, which are emphatically denied by the Maharajah himself. The Maharajah, as I shall show, has applied for a trial in India. That has been denied him. The Secretary of State here has been asked to sanction an inquiry, and has refused; the Leader of the House has been asked to appoint a Select Committee of Inquiry, and has also refused, so that neither judicial, nor Parliamentary, nor Governmental inquiry is being allowed, although this gentleman has been subjected to penalties which, in the case of the meanest person in this country, would entitle him to have the accusations brought before some tribunal, and witnesses against him heard. There is no other manner of bringing this matter before the House than by moving the adjournment. Though I can understand that hon. Gentlemen opposite may think it unfair that the adjournment should be moved, they must remember that on Indian matters I have always shown the greatest consideration to the Government; so much so, that at the beginning of this Session I did not avail myself, as I might have done, of my right to move an Amendment to the Address, and I only now make a Motion for the adjournment, because there are no Estimates in Supply on which, as in any case affecting any other portion of Her Majesty's Dominions, a question of grievance may be raised. It is either in the manner I am raising it to-night, or not at all. Now, on May 14th of last year—that is more than 12 months ago—the Maharajah himself asked the Government of India for a fair trial. I will read to the House presently the touching words in which that appeal for a fair trial was made. From then till now, except in a Despatch, from which it will be my duty to quote, no kind of answer has been made to that appeal, and the Maharajah has been condemned unheard. I should have pressed this claim for inquiry 12 months ago, but there were then no Papers before the House. It would have been open for the Government to say, in the fashion in which rumour has said, that this unfortunate gentleman had been guilty of crime, or was suffering the consequences of vice, because these suggestions could be found embodied in official Despatches, to which I shall refer, and that there was, therefore, a lack of duty in bringing the matter before the House until the Government had put before it the statements on which they rely. Although this unfortunate Gentleman was deprived of his authority and his property at the beginning of last year, the presentation of Papers has been delayed until last week. They have been repeatedly pressed for by myself and other Members. Until the Government had put their case on the Table anyone would have been at a great disadvantage in submitting to this House any matter for its decision. I do not propose to ask the House, in the Division I shall challenge, to express any other opinion on the facts I shall submit than that when such a penalty is enforced against the prince, with whom we have a treaty—who has recently been regarded as being in the position of a feudatory prince, the man so dealt with is entitled to that which any other subject of Her Majesty, if he be a subject of Her Majesty, is entitled to, namely, a fair trial before condemnation. The Under Secretary must not shelter himself under considerations of State. If considerations of State justify the Government of India in depriving one man of his authority and property unheard, there is no protection for any one, be he prince or peasant, throughout the whole of our Asiatic dominions. The other day the question was stated as simply as possible in the language of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India (Sir J. Gorst), in answer to a question put by myself. The right hon. Gentleman said:—

> "The action of the Government in Kashmir has been based not upon grave personal charges made against the Maharajah."

I would ask the House to remember that, because this man's character has been rumoured away and lied away, with the help of forged letters, during the last year and a half—forged letters used as instruments of political warfare—letters, the authority of which has been denied by the Maharajah, letters which have never been produced in his presence, and yet which, the Government have the face to refer to in their worst fashion in one of the Despatches I shall read to the House. I shall be relieved from any question as to the personal conduct of the Maharajah. He may be good or bad; I do not care what he is—he is entitled to justice. If he has been criminal, let him be condemned and punished; but do not rob him under cover of a criminalty which you dare not bring in evidence against him, and as to which you will allow no inquiry, either in India or here. The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary said the action of the Government was based upon the long-continued mis-government of Kashmir. Well, this unfortunate gentleman has only been the ruler of Kashmir for about five years; and I will quote, to within a few months of the time he was dispossessed, the testimony of the Government itself, that mismanagement did not exist as far as it was in his power to help it. I cannot conceive—I should not be justified in saying before you, Sir, anything more impudent—but I can conceive nothing more cool than the audacity of the confidence that this House would be imposed upon by the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary, that there had been long-continued mis-government in Kashmir, such as justified the dethronement of this man. Vague statements there are here, but not one statement of fact. Mis-government must be made up of something. You may shadow a man, put him unjustly in prison, or take away his property. None of these things are alleged against this unfortunate gentleman. Well, the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that the Government of India have never attached any importance to certain treasonable and criminal correspondence attributed to the Maharajah. It would have been as well not to have described the character of the correspondence, if no importance was attached to it. Why suggest that it was criminal and treasonable if it was not true, as it was not, that he was responsible for it. I do not suggest that the right hon. Gentleman has made an inaccurate statement, but I do say he has been ignorant of the facts. I will read the evidence given by the Viceroy himself with regard to this correspondence, which the right hon. Gentleman dare not lay before this

House, which he dare not put in print, but on which the emissaries of the Government have lied away the Maharajah's character during the last year and a-half. I will dispose of this point at once, because, fortunately, we have the Papers on the Table, and are able now to deal with them. So far from its being true that the Government have never attached the smallest importance to the correspondence, the Viceroy himself says the Government were justified "not merely by the disclosure of these letters"—so that they consider themselves in part justified by them. [Sir J. GORST indicated dissent.] The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. It is the Viceroy's head that should be shaken here. I admit that the right hon. Gentleman dare not rely on the letters. I admit the right hon. Gentleman has too much good sense to use in justification of the position assumed by the Government letters, which the man himself declares to be forgeries, and which the Government have never dare to produce to his face. But in a long Despatch, dated Simla, June 26th, 1889, I say the Viceroy did say these letters were things on which the Government acted in condemning this unfortunate gentleman. What did the Maharajah himself say about these letters? In a letter which, unfortunately, time will not permit me to read fully to the House, he made a plea for justice, first to the Government of India, and then, through the Government, to the English Parliament. He said, "These letters are nothing but most daring forgeries," and he suggests that one of the forgers, if not the only forger, is his brother, whom the Government of India has placed in the position of authority, of which they have deprived this unfortunate gentleman himself. My allegation will be that it was on these letters—for the Papers disclosed nothing else, and, further, negative everything else—that this action of the Government was based. [Sir J. GORST again expressed dissent.] The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but I have read the Papers, which he evidently has not done himself, and I shall read extracts to the House to show I am within the mark in every statement of this kind I make. Why did the Government of India, 12 months ago, say they did not merely act on these letters? What did that phrase mean if they did not act on them at all? Have the Government since discovered they are forgeries? If so, as they are part of the case on which misgovernment and criminality are alleged against this unfortunate gentleman, the whole story, if it does not fall to the ground, at any rate, rests on other matters, with reference to which this man demands to be put on his trial, and as to which no evidence has been offered. Lord Cross, speaking last year at Sheffield, used words little stronger than, and, if I may be allowed to say so, not quite so skilfully as the euphemistic language of the First Lord to-night, and of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary last week. He said:—

> "We did interfere in the matter of Kashmir; why? Because the people of Kashmir were so ground down by the tyranny and misgovernment of the Maharajah that we were bound as the paramount power to interfere for the protection of the interests of the inhabitants.

Where, in these Papers, is there one instance of grinding down? If you want to steal Kashmir, as, unfortunately, we have stolen, often stolen, in India and other parts of the world, then say so at once, and at least have the merit of honest thieves. Do not be hypocritical by saying you set up self-Government where self-Government has no existence. What is the position of Kashmir towards this country? Fortunately, the history is not long so far as it affects this unfortunate man, and I will deal with it as briefly as it is possible to do. The history of Kashmir, for the purpose of to-night's discussion, began with the Treaty of 1846, with the grandfather of the gentleman whose cause I am pleading. Then, for a considerable money payment, recorded in the 3rd section of the Treaty, the British Government transferred and made over for ever, in independent possession, to Maharajah Golab Singh and the heirs male of his body, the territory which includes Kashmir and Jummoo. This is not a case of an ordinary feudatory State. So little was it regarded as a feudatory State, that in the Statistical Abstract of this very year you have the evidence of its non-inclusion up to 1881 amongst the feudatory States; and there was never anything to suggest that we had a right or duty to send a Resident there until 1885, on the death of the father of the present Maharajah. I will not trouble the House with what has passed until the few days before the commencement of the reign of the present chief. The Maharajah Golab Singh, with whom the Treaty of the 10th of March, 1846, was made, was succeeded by his son about the time of the Indian Mutiny, and Lord Canning, in an official document, gave Maharajah Rumbir Singh, who had succeeded Golab Singh in 1857, the *Sanad* of adoption, which provided that in case of failure of issue, he and his successors would be competent to adopt an heir, and thus perpetuate the line. This was given on the ground of the great service rendered by the Maharajah during the mutiny. The Maharajah Rumbir Singh was ill in 1884, and I am afraid that some 14 or 15 years ago, when Jingoism was specially paramount in the making of great military frontiers and things of that kind, we looked with longing eyes upon the property of others, and were disposed to ignore any sense of justice in our dealings with them. It was then said that Rumbir Singh had misgoverned his country. If he had, it was a matter with which, except as being, by treaty, the paramount power, in which case we might have made remonstrance, we had nothing whatever to do. But, as a matter of fact, we made no remonstrance to him. The Under Secretary of State dissents. Then why is it not in the Papers? The Papers began in 1884 with a Despatch relating to the alleged misgovernment during the time of the present Maharajah's father. The words of the Despatch precluded the possibility of remonstrance having been made. But what happens is that while the Maharajah is dying, the Viceroy of India, looking to the matter, as he says, with a view to his troublesome neighbours on the North West Frontier, certain reforms are suggested which, on the accession of the son of the then dying man, it would be well should be carried out, and I will read to the House, in the words of Lord Dufferin himself, the admission that many of these reforms had been carried out during the short period that this gentleman sat on the Throne. In 1885 the succession of Prapat Singh was formally recognised by the Government. He came to the throne under the Treaty which I have read to the House. One new departure there was against which the Maharajah protested namely, the establishment of a Residency instead of Kashmir being an independent possession, which, under the Treaty, it was, subject to the supremacy of the Empress Queen. After the appointment of a Resident, it is a monstrously unfair thing to spring a mine four or five years afterwards, and allege, as an excuse for confiscating property and power, that there had been misgovernment, where, if there had been misgovernment, it should have been reported day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. There are no such Reports. If the Secretary of State has got them, he ought to have printed them. I am not asking the House to say that this unfortunate man is guiltless, but I am asking them to say that he is entitled to be tried, and to have an inquiry before he is deprived of his rights. In 1890 the Government deprived this gentleman of his chieftainship. By what right? By no right save the right of force. By what law? By no law save the law of force. Upon what charges? Upon charges of the vaguest description. It is clear these Papers are delusive Papers. There must have been Reports made by the Viceroy, which Reports ought to be in the hands of the House. If it is said that they are of confidential character—if it is said they cannot be produced, at any rate, the witnesses who can prove the occasions of misgovernment ought to be produced in some Court. Is it because this man is rich; is it because his property is in a place where you want to have property because of frontier considerations; is he to be deprived of the right which you admit to the meanest person accused within this country, or within the Asiatic dominions of the Empress Queen herself? It is a monstrous thing, and I ask the House to look at it without consideration of Party, because you must remember it is not a question only of this man, but of every feudatory prince whose property you may want to take and merge in our dominions. The Papers have not been put on the Table in a hurry. They have been in the skilled hands of the Under Secretary. We all know how frank the Under Secretary can be if he likes, and I ask him to tell the House how many Papers relating to these important Despatches between the Government of India and the Secretary of State have been kept back, and why? It is clear some have—the language shows it. Why are any kept back? They have been kept back because the action of the Government cannot be defended. I do not know what the charges are against the Maharajah, and I am only asking that this Parliament shall say that the Government of India, however powerful, and whatever the State considerations are, has no right to rob this man. On the 14th of September, 1885, the Viceroy sent a Despatch, to which I must allude for a moment. It was sent just on the accession of the present Maharajah to the throne, and I allege to the House it makes a clear Bill up to that time, so far as any charges of misgovernment entitled our Government to interfere. The Viceroy says:—

> "I trust that your Highness's life may be long and prosperous, and that in all difficulties, of whatsoever kind, you will rely with confidence upon the good will of the British Government, which will never fail you so long as you are loyal to the Crown and earnest in the desire to rule your State with justice and moderation. Your Highness has before you a difficult task. During the illness of your father, the administration of the State became seriously disorganised, and it will be necessary for you to introduce many reforms."

I will show you that three years after, in Lord Dufferin's time, reforms had been admittedly carried out, and that misgovernment is an excuse for stealing the man's property. The Maharajah wrote in reply protesting against the Residency being placed upon him. He said—

> "I do not hesitate to admit that the existing state of affairs in Kashmir and Jammu urgently requires immediate introduction of substantial reforms into the administration of the country, and now that you have power commensurate with my responsibilities, I beg to answer your Excellency that nothing shall be spared on my part, and no time will be lost to prove beyond any possibility of doubt that it is my ambition to succeed in making my country a model of a well-governed State in alliance with the Government of India."

Having got the Resident at the capital, what do we find? We find that the Resident wants to get rid of the Maharajah, he submits some Report to the Government, the particulars of which we do not know, and a Report, the particulars of which we do know, dated March 5th, 1888. Let me point out, in the first place, that in the Despatch of the 5th of March, 1888, there is nothing to justify any of the words of Lord Cross at Sheffield, or the words of the Under Secretary of State last week, as to misgovernment, or the words of the First Lord of the Treasury to-night. Now, what was the decision the Government of India came to in August, 1888? It was that the condition of the State did not seem to demand much action, as Mr. Plowden had suggested, and that the Government had, therefore, determined not to resort to measures which would have the effect, directly or indirectly, of taking the power out of the Maharajah's hands. Yet in less than seven months after that Despatch power was taken out of his hands, and taken out solely on these letters. Solely, perhaps, is a strong word to use; but immediately after taking possession of these letters suggesting the worst of crimes—letters which the Maharajah had always denied, and as to which he is always entitled to be heard before a Select Committee of this House, or before the Viceroy himself. He had confidence in the British Government; but he had no confidence in the officials, whom, he said, misrepresented him. The decision that there should be no interference with the Maharajah, directly or indirectly, disposes of Mr. Plowden's Report of the 8th of March, 1888. I come now to April, 1889, when we had some further action. I will first mention that on the 25th of July, 1888, Lord Dufferin wrote—

> "I do not overlook the fact that, since the appointment of the Council of which Diwan Lachman Dass was a member, considerable progress has been made in the direction of reform; useful work has been done with regard to the revenue administration, and in the reorganisation of the Public Works and Medical Departments. But much remains to be done.'"

This is not the language of condemnation of the chronic mis-government and the grinding down of the people. Misgovernment is only an invention—an excuse for having dispossessed this man—and I think I have a right to quote this evidence given by Lord Dufferin in 1888. This unfortunate prince, hampered by the Resident, who dictated the policy he should pursue, did make reforms as entitled him to the praise of Lord Dufferin, a statesman of the greatest eminence, of the keenest judgment, and a man who cannot be charged with being at all partial to the class of man I am defending here this afternoon. Now, I come to these horrid letters. There is a batch of 34, and the Maharajah says that they are all forgeries. I do not ask you to say whether they are or are not, but I say that if they are used against him he is entitled to go into Court and cross-examine the witnesses against him. Other letters on which the Government have relied have been abandoned as forgeries within the memory of many of us in this House. What is the character of them as described by the Resident? The character of them is that the Maharajah offered large sums of money to certain individuals on condition that they would murder, or cause to be removed, Mr. Plowden, the late Resident. It is alleged that these letters showed treasonable correspondence with the enemies of England. All these things are denied by the Maharajah. I do not ask you to say whether the Maharajah is right or wrong; but I say that when letters alleging murder are produced against a Prince, with whom we have a Treaty of Alliance, immediately after which we take away his property, the commonest and the merest justice demands that he should have an opportunity of being heard before a Select Committee of this House, or some tribunal competent to deal with his offence, if offence he has committed. The Government are not going to stand by these letters to-night, but the Viceroy has stood by them, and I will read you words in which they are so stood by. The Viceroy said—

> "In the spring of this year,"

that is last year,

> "my attention was called to the documents referred to in your Highness's letter. Many of these had every appearance of being genuine, and they have, moreover, a striking resemblance to those other papers of which I have already spoken, and which came into the possession of the Government of India at a previous time.
>
> "Your Highness is correct in expressing your belief that the action subsequently taken by my Government was not justified merely by the disclosures contained in these letters."

Where is the report upon which they acted? The man had a right to be tried. The letters are vague statements. The Viceroy goes on—

> 'Notwithstanding the ample resources of your State your treasury was empty."

Well, if you are going to dethrone every Prince whose treasury becomes empty I do not know how far you are prepared to carry your policy. Does the Government really mean that? If that be so, how is it they took from this man the advance or deposit or loan of a large sum of money amounting to 25 lacs of rupees? They had this in their hands when the Treasury was empty. Why did they take money for Lady Dufferin's admirable Fund? Why, if the treasury was empty, did they take millions of rupees for railway works in the interest of frontier defence? Treasury empty! Why you and your Resident helped to empty it, and then you tell this unfortunate man it is a reason why he should be dethroned?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): Will the hon. Gentleman finish the sentence?

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: You put on the Table what you please, and with the House half empty, because every Member feels the difficulty when a Motion for adjournment is moved, I have, with such knowledge as is supplied, to make what case I can with this far off matter.

SIR J. GORST: I only interrupted the hon. Gentleman to point out that he had not read the sentence to the end, and I thought to put the case fairly it should be given to the end.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: I will read it to the end, and show that the right hon. Gentleman gains nothing by making me read it—

> "Notwithstanding the ample resources of your State your Treasury was empty; corruption and disorder prevailed in every Department and every office; Your Highness was still surrounded by low and unworthy favourites, and the continued misgovernment of your State was becoming every day a more serious source of anxiety."

Well, there is not a word affecting finance there. I was going to deal with each allegation in turn. "Low and unworthy favourites!" Every Prince has these, even in his own household; every Oriental Prince has such. The whole history of our transactions with native feudatory Princes shows that when we have wanted to take their money, their land, their position, we have used vices which appeared at the time to suit our purposes and help us to gain our ends. I do not know what the right hon. Gentleman means by inviting me to read to the end, as if I had omitted some allusion to the empty Treasury. Why, the Indian Government had then 25 lacs of rupees of his, and millions of rupees had been laid out in railway works. Who are these low and unworthy people? It is not enough to make a vague statement; where is the evidence? Let the man be tried. A man complains of a burglary in his jeweller's shop, and you say to him, "Oh, but you were misusing the jewels." I ask the House to take at least some tone of dignity in this matter. This irresponsible Government of India, as an Indian Secretary once said, has no public opinion to influence it, no Parliament to control it, no Press to criticise it. The Government of India is a despotism; that has, in many degrees, been well for India; it is a despotism which has brought in its train advantages which many of these poor people would not otherwise have obtained; but it cannot be denied that in many respects that despotism in the past has been tainted with fraud and crime, and I hope it is not left to the present Government to revive these evil traditions in obtaining possession of Kashmir. The Empress Queen, the paramount Power acting as Judge, has condemned this man unheard. No man should be under menace of this. The grandfather of this Prince bought these lands, and we, by Treaty, declared they belonged to him for ever. [Sir J. GORST expressed dissent.] The right hon. Gentleman does not seem to be acquainted with all these facts in the history of India. Shall I ask him to read and tell us the exact sum paid for the Maharajah's dominions? How do the Government justify their action? They say the Maharajah resigned; he says he did nothing of the kind. I am more inclined to believe him than even the Under Secretary, for whose statements I have always the profoundest respect. Officially there could be nothing better than the way he answers questions in this House; but when history, some 50 years hence, comes to deal with him, the comment of the historian will be, how wickedly the Government officials deceived the Under Secretary, making him say as truth the things that were not true. It is said the Maharajah voluntarily resigned. It is true that on March 8, 1889, the Maharajah issued the following document. I will abridge it; if it is suggested I am incorrect, I will read the whole willingly, but I do not think my abridgment will differ from the exact words. The Maharajah appointed a Council who were to govern the country for five years, he reserving to himself all his princely rights and reserving certain powers, but allowing them much the same authority, as allowing for Oriental position, a Cabinet enjoys here. The Government of India do not accept that yet; they say they accepted a voluntary resignation. What he offered they would not have; what they wanted they took from him. The Maharajah says he acted under pressure. I do not ask the House to decide that; but I do say that he is entitled to a Select Committee here, or I may say he would be content with an inquiry conducted in India if Lord Lansdowne will give his personal attention to it. The right hon. Gentleman is better acquainted with the Government of India than I am. He knows that Residents are not always perfect; that Residents sometimes quarrel with a Prince, and that matters are alleged as facts which do not always bear the test and scrutiny of examination. This man, through my mouth, appeals to this House, not that you should make a decree that the Government of India is wrong; he simply asks for an inquiry. He has a right to that inquiry. I regret that the appeal is not made by an abler tongue—by a better-informed man. But I am limited to the information in the Parliamentary Papers presented to the House and such records as the history of India enables me to present, and I say without fear of contradiction that no case is made out for the action that has been taken. In 1888 the Government of India and the Secretary of State in Council at home came to the conclusion there was nothing for which, directly or indirectly, the Maharajah ought to be deprived of power, and within seven months they take it all away. If you trample on Treaties; if your obligations to the Princes of India are to be broken, and the native rulers are not to rely on your word, and English justice in India is a shadow and a delusion, let that be known, but let those who hold a contrary opinion vote for my Motion as the means of protest. The government of India should be no Party question, either to Liberal or Conservative, Radical or Whig; our duty and our interest demand that our paramount rule in India should be just.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

*(5.43.) SIR J. GORST: I do not for a moment dispute the right of the hon. Member to challenge the action of the Government of India or to ask the House to order an inquiry if there is anything to inquire into. If the House will give me its attention for a short time, I will tell the House why the Government of India has acted in the manner it has, and why it appears to the Secretary of State this is not a subject which can properly be made matter of inquiry either by Judicial Commission in India or by Select Committee of the House of Commons. I need not take the House back to the early history of Kashmir; the hon. Member for Northampton has, in the little history he has given, indicated to the House that after the Sikh War we by force of arms placed a Hindoo ruler over the Mohammedan people of Kashmir; and, by doing this, we incurred, as it seems to me, the responsibility of seeing that these Mohammedan people who by the action of the British Government were subjected to an alien dynasty were at least fairly and properly governed. Now, complaints of the misgovernment of Kashmir are not so modern as the hon. Member for Northampton seems to suppose. I should like to read to the House the observations which were made by the Government of Lord Ripon in 1884, and Lord Ripon was a Viceroy whose error did not, at all events, lie in over-interference with Native Chiefs. This was what was said by his Government in 1884:—"The misgovernment to which the people of this country (Kashmir) have long been subjected."— The hon. Member for Northampton asks what the nature of the misgovernment was, and I will try before I sit down to give the House some faint idea of the nature and results of this misgovernment." Lord Ripon said—

> "The people of that country have long been subjected to misgovernment, and this was some time since brought prominently into notice by Mr. Henvey. We did not take action at once, conceiving that a favourable opportunity would offer on the occasion of a fresh succession."

The Maharajah Runbir Singh was then suffering from a mortal illness, and his death was expected.

> "When that event takes place, we shall consider that it will be our duty to impress on the Kashmir Government its obligations to its own subjects, and to see that reforms so urgently needed are no longer postponed."

To those remarks of Lord Ripon's Government an answer was returned by Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State under the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and Lord Kimberley stated in his Despatch his doubts whether the Government of India was justified in hesitating, so long as it had hesitated, to interfere in the affairs of Kashmir. It may, indeed, be questioned whether, having regard to the circumstances under which a Hindoo family were settled as rulers, the intervention of the British Government on behalf of the Mohammedan people had not already been too long delayed. Well, the Government of India waited 18 months, and in 1885 the late Maharajah died and the present Maharajah came to the Throne. The hon. Member for Northampton has already read some of the warnings which were addressed to the present Maharajah of Kashmir on the occasion of his ascending the Throne, but he said—and I really was surprised when he made the statement to the House—that until quite recently no complaint was made of his administration, and, in fact, he quoted a few expressions from some of Lord Dufferin's Despatches which would have left upon the House the impression that, upon the whole, the Government had been very successfully administered, and many reforms had been carried out. Now, what did Mr. Plowden say in March, 1888? He thought it his duty to call the formal attention of the Government of India to the fearful condition of Kashmir under the Maharajah and his associates, whom he calls a band of corrupt and mischievous men. Mr. Plowden says—

> "I think, however, that the Government of India should be under no illusion as regards Maharajah Pertab Singh. From first to last I have failed to discover in him any sustained capacity for governing his country or any genuine desire to ameliorate its condition, or to introduce those reforms which he has acknowledged to be necessary. More than two years have passed since his accession, but not only has he achieved nothing, but he has opposed beneficial measures proposed by others . . . He will never, of his own free will, establish a capable and honest administration; nor if any power of interference is left him, will he permit any administration appointed by the Government of India to carry on the business of the country. He will thwart and oppose it in every way he dares; the only restraint will be the limit of his power and his fears."

Well, at the same time that Mr.

Plowden made this grave Report to the Government of India on the condition of the country and the character of the Maharajah, a proposal was made by the Maharajah himself to appoint a Council.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Gentleman will pardon me. I stated to the House that on the Report of Mr. Plowden the Government came to the decision not to take the power from the Maharajah, and that Lord Dufferin contradicted Mr. Plowden, by recognising the fact that since the appointment of the Council, of which Diwan Lachman Dass was a member, considerable progress had been made in the direction of reforms.

*SIR J. GORST: The hon. Member is impatient. I am coming to that. I shall have something more to say first. At the time that this Report was being sent home, application was made by the Maharajah to have a Council appointed, upon which the Government of India decided to give him another trial to see whether, by his Council, he would govern the country better. I must say, speaking by the light of after events, it was unfortunate that the Government of India set aside the Report of Mr. Plowden, and gave the Maharajah what, in vulgar phrase, would be called "another chance." I confess, if the hon. Member for Northampton, instead of attacking the Government of India for having at last relieved the Maharajah of the functions of government, had attacked the Government for being so weak in 1888 as to give this second chance, I am sure that I, as Under Secretary, would have found it difficult to make out a good defensive case. But Lord Dufferin decided on this course. He wrote a complimentary letter to the Maharajah, which the hon. Member has read, and no doubt he made use of the expressions the hon. Member has quoted as to the success of the Council, since the appointment of Diwan Lachman Dass, under whom considerable progress, he said, had been made in the direction of reform. But will the House believe that the object of that letter, on which the hon. Member relies as showing the improvement in the government of the country, was to remonstrate with the Maharajah for dismissing summarily, and without the knowledge of the Government of India, that same Diwan Lachman Dass, whose reforms were praised in the passage of Lord Dufferin's letter which the hon. Member has quoted as praising the Maharajah for the improvements in the government of the country. The beginning of Lord Dufferin's letter which the hon. Member has not quoted is as follows:—

> "I cannot avoid informing your Highness that the news of the sudden removal of Diwan Lachman Dass was received by me with some surprise. Your Highness appointed him to your Council after consulting me, and I hoped that your Highness would, before making another change of Government, give me some previous intimation of your views. However, this point has already been brought to your notice by Mr. Plowden, and I do not now desire to dwell upon it further."

Well, the arrangements for governing the country by means of a Council were made, and, in order to give the new scheme the fullest possible chance of success, Mr. Plowden was removed from Kashmir on the occasion of his promotion, and Colonel Nisbet, a personal friend of the Maharajah, and in whom the Maharajah placed implicit confidence, was sent to Kashmir. Now, I said I would give the House some little idea of the misgovernment that the hon. Member for Northampton treated so lightly, and of which he said no trace was to be found in the Papers before the House. Now, if hon. Members have read the Papers, they will see that they close with the Report of a certain gentleman of the name of Wingate. Mr. Wingate was a Revenue Officer of the Bombay Government of 19 years' experience, and he had also been employed in the revenue settlement of some of the native States of Rajputana. He was a highly qualified and experienced officer. He was employed by the Maharajah's Government, and his Report well deserves the study of anybody who desires to understand the position of Kashmir, although it is full of technicalities and written in a dry business-like technical spirit, but his narrative is enlivened occasionally by the most horrible statements as to the condition of Kashmir. Let me say this gentleman was 18 months among the people surveying in Kashmir and Jummoo, and he appears to have gone to work in a dry business-like fashion. In these Oriental States we know that the foundation of the happiness of the people consists in the correct measurement of their land. The first thing Mr. Wingate discovered was that the measurement of the land upon which the ryots paid their rent was altogether incorrect against the ryots.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Does the right hon. Gentleman represent that in any way that this was done under the direction of the Maharajah?

*SIR JOHN GORST: The evil existed under the Government of the Maharajah, and was approved by the Maharajah's Government.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Mr. Wingate's Report referred to the existing state of things, part of the condition of things that had long existed over Kashmir, was no part of the mis-government of the Maharajah.

*SIR JOHN GORST: It was part of the condition of things in Kashmir under a Government of which the Maharajah was the head. I do not know whether the Maharajah shields himself under the allegation that all this had happened in the past, and that he was not responsible for the misgovernment which he allowed to exist. I do not think this House will take such a view of the limitations of the Maharajah's duties to his subjects. Besides, we have read Mr. Plowden's Report, in which it is stated that the Maharajah opposed those reforms which were admitted to be necessary. Now, under the land system in Kashmir the assessment of the ryots is arbitrarily fixed, and a divisional official gets the revenue out of the unhappy cultivators in the best way he can, the result being that from one-half to two-thirds of the gross produce of the land was exacted from these unhappy people, mostly in kind and partly also in cash.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Does not Mr. Wingate say that existed as far back as 1874?

*SIR J. GORST: I have been reading the Report.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: You have not been reading at all.

*SIR J. GORST: The hon. Member challenged me to say what the misgovernment had been in Kashmir.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I challenged the right hon. Gentleman to prove specific acts of misgovernment on the part of the Maharajah.

*SIR J. GORST: I am in the recollection of the House. I appeal to hon. Members whether, if the case rested solely on the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton, they would not have gone away in the belief that Kashmir was the best governed country in the world. I am showing what was the state of the affairs which compelled the Government of India to take this action. I am going to show the House why the Government in the interests of humanity were peremptorily called upon to take this step. [*A laugh.*] The hon. Member may laugh, but I think it is not a laughing matter. Now, let me describe what was done. The assessment was paid at fixed rates in kind, that is to say, it was levied on the people in money value, and then they were made to give produce at certain fixed and prescribed rates in lieu of paying the assessment in cash. In the case of rice, the main staple which the ryots cultivated, the prescribed rate was extremely unfavourable to the cultivator—all this is in Mr. Wingate's Report, and if I am epitomising it unfairly the hon. Member can subsequently correct me. I do not see why he should interrupt me now—but the prescribed rates for cotton, which is grown by the richer ryots, were very favourable. Therefore it came to this, that the Officers of the Revenue allowed the rich ryots to pay on the staple bearing the most favourable rate, while the poor ryots had to pay on the staple bearing the most unfavourable rates. Every year, says Mr. Wingate in his Report, "the bulk of the rise goes into the city;" and further, he adds, "these poor ryots often have to buy it back at two or three times the price at which it was credited to them in their assessment." And then this dry technical Report contains this statement, "In this fertile valley there are women and children actually starving." Further on it says—

> "It may be easier now to understand why the Kashmir cares naught for rights in land, why his fields are fallow or full of weeds, and manure and water neglected, why he has, as I can well believe, even to be forced to cultivate. The revenue system is such that, whether he works much or little, he is left with barely enough to get along on till next harvest. He is a machine to produce Shâli for a very large and most idle city population."

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.). Like Ireland!

*SIR J. GORST: A city, the population of which consists of officials and of Hindoo pundits, who have prepared the brief from which the hon. Member for Northampton spoke. These men get their rice cheap, while the ryot who grows it, and is forbidden to dispose of it for export starves. Again, Mr. Wingate says that

> "The cultivator is compelled to grow rice, and in many years to part with it below the proper market rate, in order that the city may be content. If the harvest is too little for both, the city must be supplied, and is supplied, by any force that may be necessary, and the cultivator and his children must go without. That is the explanation of the angry discontent that filled the valley during the famine. The cultivator is considered to have rights neither to his land nor to his crops. The city population have a right to be well fed whether there is famine or not;"

and that is not all. The officials of the Revenue contractors are gradually in Kashmir converting themselves into landlords. They get grants of waste land, they foreclose upon ryots who are indebted, and they purchase a considerable part of the land, and as Mr. Wingate says—

> "Since the death of the Maharajah Gelab Singh, from which date central authority appears to have been weaker, there has been a steadily, and, latterly, rapidly increasing transference of land from the cultivating to the non-cultivating classes, and a landlord element is intruding itself between the cultivator and the State."

I earnestly commend this to the attention of some of the hon. Members from Ireland. Then, besides this, there exists among the unhappy ryots a system of *begar*, or forced labour. This scourge, which is peculiar to the Government villages, and from which the villages which happen to be in the hands of these landlords are free, is imposed upon the people with the utmost severity.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I venture to make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman. I fancy that by the Rules of the House I have no right of reply. I wish to ask him, in reference to this forced labour, whether it is not a fact that the system prevailed long before the death of the father of this unfortunate gentleman, and whether the Maharajah did not himself issue a decree abolishing it?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I may explain that the hon. Member will be entitled to reply, and it would be more convenient therefore for him to reserve his comments.

*SIR J. GORST: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity of replying, because otherwise he will not wait patiently to hear the end of my argument. He challenged me to show misgovernment in Kashmir. I am telling him what exists there, and presently I will ask him what was the Government of India to do under the circumstances. This forced labour was so unreasonably enforced on the people that if 20 coolies were wanted it was customary to requisition a hundred. Eighty would buy themselves off with payments to the officers, and 20 of the poorest would be compelled to do the duty. And it was so serious and so formidable that they left their homes and hid themselves for days in order to escape the work. I am speaking of matters which are within the knowledge of many hon. Members of this House who have served in India. But I am bound to repeat them when this House is asked to censure the conduct of the Government of India. Mr. Wingate says that the cultivators under this Hindoo rule have been pressed down to the condition of coolies cultivating the State property at subsistence allowance. This has been going on in Kashmir for years, and what has been the result? The population has been reduced by one-half, the ryots are deserting the country wherever they can do so, the villages are ruined, the bridges broken down, the irrigation channels are abandoned, and a population under the protection of a British Government which boasts of its Christianity and its civilisation, has sunk into a condition which I have tried faintly to describe. "They are gaunt with want and famine, they gnaw the ground in wasteness and desolation." This, Mr. Speaker, is a description of the condition of the unhappy people of Kashmir, which seems to have moved the laughter of the hon. Member opposite. I should have thought he would have treated the subject more seriously. Such was the condition of the people—a condition which weighed upon the Government of India and the Secretary of State, who had hoped almost against hope that the new arrangement of the Maharajah would afford some amelioration in the condition of the people.

But no. Colonel Nisbett, appointed Resident because he was the Maharajah's friend, arrived at precisely the same conclusion as Mr. Plowden, and his conversion to those views was announced to the Government of India at the time of the discovery of the treasonable criminal letters, to which the hon. Member for Northampton has alluded. These letters, in spite of what the hon. Member says, have never been treated by the Government of India as serious, nor have they been made the ground for the exclusion of the Maharajah from interference in the public affairs of Kashmir. They might never have been noticed had they not been accompanied by the resignation, of his own accord, of part of his power. The Government of India, at the outset, said they were not disposed to attach excessive importance to these letters. They also wrote that they did not exclusively base their action upon the Maharajah's edict of resignation, but the edict gave them an occasion—and they would have been criminal if they had neglected to avail themselves of it—for placing the affairs of Kashmir on a more satisfactory basis. The Despatch in which these conclusions were announced to the Secretary of State contains these words—

> "We greatly regret the necessity for any interference at all, but we are now convinced that, in the interests of the people of Kashmir, and of the ruling family itself, it is no longer right or possible to leave the control of affairs in the hands of the Maharajah."

In the whole of this business the Government of India have carefully avoided acting upon any personal grounds and I must object to the hon. Member for Northampton, and those who instruct him, trying to make out that this is a sort of personal question between the Maharajah and the Government of India. They insist on making out that the Maharajah has been deposed from his throne because of these letters, or because of some personal vices, or because of his own resignation. Not one of these is the real ground upon which the Government of India has acted. As I have stated in this House, in answer to questions over and over again, the Government of India has acted in the interests of the people of Kashmir and of their right to better Government. I can only say that, in my humble opinion, these reforms could not longer be delayed, and, if anything, both the Government of Mr. Gladstone and the present Government ought to reproach themselves for the long delay. It is a curious example of the irony of fate that the Radical Member for Northampton should be pleading in this House the Divine right of an Oriental despot to deal with his people as he pleases, and that I, a humble but reactionary Tory, should be pleading the right of these poor Moslems of Jummoo to cultivate their own land. But we have of late been accustomed in this House to strange sights. I ask the House to look at the Papers and see how careful the Government of India has been of the right of this reigning family. Will the House believe that in the Government of this country, the Government which is the paramount power in Kashmir, not an Englishman sits on the Council, which is composed exclusively of the natives of the State, and includes two members of the reigning family. The Government of India does not, and never has, in its policy interfered with the personal rights of the chiefs of India. It has been most careful of all existing rights, of all rights that affect the chiefs. But there is one right which it regards as more sacred than even the rights of Oriental despots to their thrones, and that is the right of the people who live under the protection of the power of Great Britain to just and upright Government. I hope that the House of Commons will not stand in the way of justice being done to the people of Kashmir. I hope that the House of Commons to-night will, by a large majority, approve the conduct of the Government of India in at last interfering in this unhappy State, and in allowing the Maharajah of Kashmir and the chiefs of India generally to know that, although their rights are respected, it is on the condition that their people are moderately happy and moderately justly governed.

*(6.24.) MR. BRADLAUGH: I will, Sir, at once take advantage of the right of reply which you have ruled rests with me. The point I wish to state is so important that I think it better to put it before the House at once. I say that the Report of Mr. Wingate refers to no specific act of misgovernment by the

deposed Maharajah. It relates a state of things which obtained long prior to the Maharajah's birth, and which he has himself partially remedied since his accession to power. In September, 1885, he actually issued a decree abolishing forced labour both in Kashmir and in Jummoo, so far as he could, and in another decree he removed the cause of complaint as to the price of edibles. For three years this unfortunate man, step by step, took up reforms; and in one of his Despatches he speaks of the settlement of the land question as a task which it would take five years to deal with. I never said that the Government of Kashmir was perfect; on the contrary, I said that, like all Oriental Governments, it had many defects, and that the people of Kashmir were in a state of misery and difficulty, from which millions of the population of India were not free. I repeat that no specific act of misgovernment has been even pretended to be proved against the Maharajah, and that, so far as Mr. Plowden's Report is concerned, the decision of the Government of India itself was that it did not justify any interference on their part.

(6.26.) **MR. MAC NEILL**: The Under Secretary for India is always interesting, and his great abilities add additional charms to what he says. But on this occasion I think he was scarcely fair in accusing me of smiling at the sufferings of these people. I see too much suffering to regard it otherwise than with infinite sorrow and sympathy. What I smiled at was this. Knowing, as I do, the infamous transactions and secret springs which I intend to expose, I smiled that a gentleman representing a Government guilty of such conduct should claim universal benevolence and pretend to be benefiting the people, whereas they are robbing an ancient Prince of his inheritance. The right hon. Gentleman was careful to put forward the religious question, and to point out that the Maharajah was a Hindoo, while his subjects were Mahommedans. But I can tell him that if he would take a *plébiscite* of the inhabitants of Kashmir he would find that three-fourths of the people favour the restoration of the Prince. We know that 40,000,000 of our subjects in India are in a constant state of starvation, and that during the famine in 1877 the number of deaths from famine exceeded the population of London. Surely our efforts at administration in India have not been so successful as to justify our bringing more of the natives under our system. I heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman; I must say I thought it a most shifting defence. I can only repeat the statement of an eminent statesman who once said that the iniquities of the Government of India are so rank that they smell from earth to heaven. We are in precisely the same situation to-day. I may say that I speak on behalf of all my Colleagues. We are all in sympathy with the suffering and the injured classes.

***MR. SPEAKER**: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman is speaking of matters that do not arise on the Question before the House, on account of which the adjournment of the House was moved.

MR. MAC NEILL: I bow to your ruling, Sir; but I think I have a right to put it to the House whether the charges made by my hon. Friend cannot be substantiated by investigation. I think I shall be enabled to prove that the Maharajah has been deprived of his inheritance simply by the pursuance of an annexation policy, which was the approximate cause of the Indian Mutiny. What has happened has been what is called in Ireland "land-grabbing." The Maharajah, who was placed in his position many years ago, has displayed nothing but kindness and loyalty to British rule. He was placed on that throne, and it was reserved to him and his heirs, and in the meantime he has acted well towards this country. With regard to the letters on which so much stress has been laid none of them have been read to the House. Their date is important, because they came into the possession of the Government of India just about the time when Pigott's forgeries appeared in the *Times*. The Government of India has resorted to the old dodge of forged letters in order to destroy the character of this Prince. The Government had no right to depose a Prince without rhyme or reason, and it is the duty of this House to do all in its power to prevent them from doing so.

(6.45.) **MR. HUNTER**: Mr. Speaker, the defence which has been offered on the part of the Government does not explain the degradation from his rank of the

Maharajah of Kashmir, and the act of wholly unjustifiable spoliation. One remark with which the Under Secretary of State wound up his remarks, intended to be eloquent, was an appeal to this House on behalf of the poor Moslem cultivators. Why the Moslem cultivators? Surely, a Hindoo, if he happens to be a cultivator, is as much entitled to sympathy as the Moslem. But the right hon. Gentleman laid stress on the word Moslem in order to excite those unhappy religious prejudices which, unfortunately, prevail in India. He knew that in India, unfortunately, both Moslems and Hindoos are animated by strong fanatical opinions on the subject of religion, leading to collisions and breaches of the peace. And here is the Under Secretary for India, in this House, pointing his moral by the contrast between the Moslem and the Hindoo peasants, and trying thus to fan the embers of religious antipathy. What are the reasons which he adduced why the Maharajah should be deposed? Not one of the reasons had the slightest relation to anything that was done by the Maharajah of Kashmir himself. That I pass by. But what is the state of the country upon which he relies? There were three arguments. The first argument was that in consequence of the mismanagement of the revenue derived from the land there was a great deal of poverty in the country, and that the population had largely diminished. Well, I was amazed to hear a Minister sitting on that side of the House raising that as an argument why the Maharajah of Kashmir should be deposed, because the Maharajah has equally good reason for deposing you from the Government of Ireland, if that argument has any validity whatever. But that is not the only thing. We are told that the land revenue is extortionate. That is, no doubt, the reason why you are putting out the Maharajah and putting in yourselves. There is no doubt a margin, a large margin, which excites the cupidity of the British Government, and induces them to take possession of that country. But all this argument simply comes to this point, that, according to the view of the Government of India, the ancient, not the recent, mode of collecting the Revenue from the land is defective, and that oppressions arise in the exercise of the right; so that, according to the eloquent language of the right hon. Gentleman, the people are starving in the midst of plenty. That is precisely the condition of things in Ireland. The case of Ireland is precisely an analogous case. Not a single argument adduced by the right hon. Gentleman in reference to Kashmir but is applicable to Ireland, in the eyes of impartial people living outside the latter country. I am afraid the transaction is a very doubtful one, when it has to be supported by such exceedingly ludicrous statements as those which have been advanced by the Under Secretary of State.

SIR R. TEMPLE: Mr. Speaker, I feel bound to trouble the House for a very few moments on this subject, because I am one of those Members who happen to know this country of Kashmir. I have travelled over every portion of it repeatedly, and for years I was officially connected with it; and though I never had the pleasure of knowing the Maharajah of Kashmir personally, unless I may have seen him as a child, yet I knew his father well, and his grandfather also. Now, Sir, much has been said by the hon. Member for Northampton and by the hon. Member for South Donegal, and again by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, who has just sat down, regarding the ambitious or greedy eye which England has cast upon Kashmir. Indeed, in effect, the language used by hon. Members embodies the charge that England is attempting a theft of territory. Indeed, the hon. Member for Northampton exhausted the resources of phraseology in accusing England of appropriating the lands of others. But is the House aware that England gains not one rood by the transactions which are now under consideration? All that happens is the transfer of the sovereignty from one brother to another. The power, the wealth, the property, remains in the same family; it is a mere exchange from one person to another as Regent. England remains exactly in the same position as she was before, and is in no wise benefited. She has acted with entire disinterestedness, and whether she is wrong or whether she is right, her sole object has been to benefit the people of Kashmir. What ground has the hon. Member for South Donegal for saying that we want a frontier there? I am afraid the hon. Member does not know what our frontiers are. We have no military frontier in that direction. It is not from there we should be invaded. No, Sir, the mighty mountains of the Himalayas constitute an impassable barrier to any enemy, either from Asia or from Europe. Then, Sir, the hon. Member for Aberdeen seemed to find fault with my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary, for saying that the Moslem of Kashmir must be protected. The hon. Member entirely misapprehended my right hon. Friend's meaning. What my right hon. Friend meant was this, that the Maharajah of Kashmir is a Hindoo potentate, and that we interfered by force of arms to place him over a Moslem population—a population which was not Hindoo at all by allegiance or by tradition. They were, therefore, placed under an alien prince by the action of the British Government. My right hon. Friend meant to say that we were bound to see that the Moslem population suffered nothing at the hands of the Hindoo masters whom we had set over them. And the hon. Member for Aberdeen spoke of the gratitude which we owe the Maharajah of Kashmir. I am not prepared to deny that Sovereigns of his house have behaved well—his grandfather co-operated with us during the darkest days of the Mutiny. But, after all, the gratitude was due from him to us rather than from us to him. He was our ally. We had placed him on the throne for political reasons of our own, and he was bound to act for us when we required his services. Something has been said of the several British Residents. I was grieved to hear the terms of disparagement in which the hon. Member for Northampton spoke of those most able servants of the State. At all events, they have no Party purpose to serve; they are above partisan considerations. They may, like all men, be liable to error, but they are completely disinterested, and their action is based on inflexible impartiality. In this case it was not one or two, but three Residents—men of different ideas, but who all came to the same conclusion respecting the Government of Kashmir. Then, Sir, regarding the misgovernment. I quite admit that reforms were at one time introduced and carried out to a considerable extent. I, myself, in former days, have been witness to them. But I am afraid those reforms came to a termination, or at least declined. But, Sir, much was said, and with great truth, by my right hon. Friend, with regard to mismanagement of the Land Revenue, and the gross oppression which was practised upon the ryots. I quite admit that the abuses are not recent, and the Report which has been read to-night confirms what I used to hear when I was connected with the Foreign Department in India. But I am afraid that the evils have now reached alarming proportions, perhaps even a monstrous development. The hon. Member for Aberdeen speaks of the decreasing population. Now of all countries, Kashmir is the most favoured physically. The climate may be severe in winter, but in summer the land smiles with fertility, and is as bountiful as any place in the world. Indeed, Nature has lavished advantages on what once was the Happy Valley. That its population is decreasing, is a sure sign of misgovernment. I quite admit that there may have been outbreaks of cho'era and other epidemics; but as for famine, it is the last place in the world where such a calamity would be expected. The question comes, what is the nature of the misgovernment? Well, now, I submit that that is a question which should be left to the responsible Government on the spot. Surely it is our duty to see that a good Government is set up in that Empire, and when it has been set up do not harass it, or interfere with it, or try to establish Committees of Inquiry here to investigate matters, which can hardly be made the subject of specific inquiry by evidence, by prosecution, by defence, and so forth, but which must be left to the discretion of the responsible Government on the spot. If we are to have a Government at all in India we must entrust such affairs as these to that Government. There is, we are told, a bad system in this State of Kashmir; that the population is decreasing; property is not secure; that communications are not looked after; that the whole land is going rapidly to ruin, and that all Departments are falling to a low level. But how are we to examine into these matters by an inquiry such as is asked for? Such questions are hardly susceptible of *quasi*-judicial inquiry. We all know how that would end. It would end in the acquittal of the accused, while everyone knew that mal-administration existed. All these matters should be left to the Governor General in Council, and he is responsible for dealing with matters which are within his purview and not within ours, and to him we leave the responsibility. An inquiry of this kind would have a bad effect in India. The hon. Member for Northampton speaks as if this political measure of superseding the Maharajah of Kashmir would have a bad effect; but I can assure him that to have an inquiry of the kind which has been suggested, in which the whole Government of Kashmir would be overhauled by a formal investigation, would be a measure above all others calculated to alarm the Native Princes of India, and would be repugnant to those very purposes whom he proposes to serve.

*(7.2.) SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe): In this Debate we have been placed under the disadvantage that the Papers relating to Kashmir are not yet in the hands of Members. But by the courtesy of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir John Gorst), I have had the advantage of perusing these Papers for a short time, and it is only fair that I should rise to say, that so far as I can judge from a hasty perusal of the Papers, and following carefully the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, he has stated the case as regards the action of successive Viceroys and successive Secretaries of State in their relation to the late Maharajah of Kashmir and the present Maharajah with perfect fairness. I may venture to say one or two words more as to whether the facts which have been laid before us show a necessity for such an inquiry as is asked for. I believe if hon. Members will examine these Papers, they will find that there is nothing in them to call for a review by a Parliamentary Committee of the patient and deliberate action of the Government of India, who seem to have hesitated long before taking any strong step, although the misgovernment of the Maharajah has been, I fear, of a very glaring description. I would only venture to make this one remark. It should be a satisfaction to hon. Members on this side of the House to find, with respect to the Government of India, that it has not been drawn into the annexation policy which my hon. Friend deprecates, but that it leaves the Government of Kashmir under a Council of natives guided by the Resident; and in concluding a Despatch addressed by the Viceroy of India to the Maharajah of Kashmir, the Viceroy treats him with the greatest consideration and courtesy, and expresses a hope that it may be possible to give greater power to him in the future. At present the Maharajah is put in an ornamental position. He is not deposed, but simply relieved of the powers of ruler of the country; and these powers are confided to a Council. I hope, therefore, the House will pause before voting for this Motion.

*(7.6.) SIR W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): I will not detain the House for more than a few minutes, but I am not at all satisfied with the statement of the Under Secretary of State for India. The course of the Debate has rather taken us from the point we ought to have before us, and I am very much surprised to hear the remarks which have fallen from the right hon. Member who has just spoken, in face of the glaring case which has been made by the Member for Northampton. The Member for Northampton is condemning the action of the Government of India, and is asking the House to express its sense of the course taken by the Government of India with respect to the Maharajah of Kashmir, and his complaint is that they have not given this man a chance of clearing himself from the charges which have been brought against him. It is not to a Parliamentary Inquiry that this man's chance of clearing himself is to be entrusted. Why should we not have a Judicial Inquiry, and why is it that the Government are refusing to give this man a real investigation into the charges made against him? From what we have had brought before us, there is real reason to believe that not only has considerable misgovernment been going on in Kashmir in preceding reigns as now, but that there has been no reproof administered as to this misgovernment. The right hon. Gentleman asks us are we going to stand in the way of justice being done in Kashmir, but is he going to stand in the way of justice being done to the

Maharajah? If he asserts that he (the Maharajah) is innocent of the charges brought against him——

SIR JOHN GORST: There are no charges.

*SIR W. PLOWDEN: Then if there are no charges why is he deposed? Evidently there must be some misconduct attributed to this man; in fact, we know there is, because the whole defence put up by the Government is that he has been misconducting the Government, and because he has been doing so he has been deposed. He says, "I have not misconducted the Government; I am not guilty, and I ask to have my case inquired into." If the hon. Member for Northampton presses his Motion to a Division, I shall be bound to support him, unless we get a clear assertion from the right hon. Gentleman that he will send out instructions to the Government of India to form some Judicial Commission which shall inquire into the charges alleged.

(7.10.) The House divided:—Ayes 88; Noes 226.—(Div. List, No. 174.)

Friday, July 4, 1890.

EXPORTATION OF BEER FOR THE ARMY.

MR. CORNWALLIS WEST (Denbigh, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what steps are taken to ensure the beer exported to India for the use of the troops being of good quality; whether he is aware that complaints are general in that country as to its acidity and intoxicating power; and whether a lighter beer could be supplied?

SIR J. KINLOCH (Perth, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India contract for a certain amount of beer to be exported to India each month, which the troops are obliged to consume before beer purchased locally can be supplied; and whether, inasmuch as the beer purchased locally is good, sound, light beer of a non-intoxicating quality, he will take steps to alter the present system of contracting?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): My right hon. Friend the Secretary for War has asked me to reply to the question of the hon. Member for Denbigh (Mr. Cornwallis West), and I will reply at the same time to the question of the hon. Member for Perth (Sir J. Kinloch). Beer cannot be advantageously supplied locally at all stations in India, and it is, therefore, exported from this country for these stations. It is brewed according to specification, and under the supervision of Government officers. Complaints are not frequent or general, but acidity may occasionally arise from the effects of storage in India. The exported beer is lighter than the local beer, and is as light as would be safe for shipment in casks.

Monday, July 7, 1890.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury to what day he intends to postpone the Second Reading of the Indian Councils Bill?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): Until Monday, Sir.

VETERANS WHO SERVED IN THE CRIMEAN WAR AND INDIAN MUTINY.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the necessitous circumstances of many of the veterans who served in the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny; and whether he can now promise any measures for their relief?

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he has considered further the claims of the old soldiers who were engaged in the Crimean Campaign and the Indian Mutiny, and many of whom are now incapable of work and in want, and if there are any funds available for their relief; and, if not, whether the Government will award moderate pensions to those men who are found to be deserving?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I am afraid that I can add little or nothing to the answer which I gave to a similar question on the 1st of May last. I asked the hon. Member for Dundee (Mr. Robertson) to postpone his question, as I am anxious to ascertain whether, in any of the cases which have been brought before me by letter, there are special circumstances of an urgent character which would justify me in setting aside the Regulations. I do not find that there are any special circumstances, but, on the other hand, I do find that the cases are such that it would be difficult to defend the grant of any pensions at all.

Tuesday, July 8, 1890.

FACTORY LABOUR.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if the Government of India accepts, and will apply to, the regulation and limitation of the hours of labour in mines and in factories, the principles to which Her Majesty's Government assented at the Conference recently held on the invitation of the Emperor of Germany?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): There has not yet been time to obtain a reply from the Government of India to the Despatch of the Secretary of State dealing with the labour regulations, and I must ask the hon. Member to repeat the question.

MR. HOYLE: I will certainly do so.

INDIAN RAILWAYS.

MR. GROTRIAN (Hull): I beg, in the absence of the hon. Member for Central Hull, to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India propose to hand over the Tirhoot State Railway to the Bengal and North Western Railway; (2) whether, inasmuch as the Tirhoot State Railway is owned by the Government of India and returns about 7 per cent. on the capital invested, and the Bengal and North Western Railway is a private company and returns only 2½ per cent. on the invested share capital, he can explain for what consideration the Government of India is surrendering a valuable dividend paying investment; (3) whether the Tirhoot State Railway was to have been handed over to the Bengal and North Western Railway in March or April last, and whether the reason why the transfer was not then made was because the Bengal and North Western Railway insisted upon the Government completing the extension, then in progress, from Durbungah to the town of Seetamarhi; (4) whether this transfer is against the advice of the Bengal Government, and the Government of India, and against the wish of the inhabitants (Europeans and Natives) of North Behar, through which the Tirhoot line runs; and (5) whether Government will re-consider its determination?

*SIR J. GORST: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative, but for management only, and for the purpose of securing economy and efficiency. (2) The answer to the second paragraph is that the last year's earnings of the two lines were not as stated in the question, but were for the Bengal and North Western Railway 4·18 per cent., and the Tirhoot State Railway 4·62 per cent. The division of profit between the Government and the company will be in proportion to their respective capitals. (3) The answer to the third paragraph is in the negative. (4) To the fourth paragraph, yes, so far as the Government of India is concerned. It was at first in favour of, and afterwards against, the arrangement. (5) The answer to the last paragraph is in the negative.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Is the North Western Railway to obtain an equal division of the profits for the working of the line?

*SIR J. GORST: I must ask for notice of that question.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Are we to understand that this line has been handed over to a company having its headquarters in London, contrary to the view of the Government of India?

*SIR J. GORST: I have answered the question, and the hon. Member must draw his own conclusions from the answer.

Thursday, July 10, 1890.

LOTTERIES.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if it has been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State, either by Reports from India, or by advertisements in the Indian newspapers, that a very extensive system of lotteries has lately prevailed in India, the law against lotteries notwithstanding, and that very large sums have been publicly offered and drawn for in connection with the last Derby Race, as "Bengal Club Derby Sweep. 20,330 tickets at Rs.10 each, Rs.203,300. First horse, Rs.101,650," and other lotteries on the same race, advertised by the Bengal Masonic Association, the North-West Club, Allahabad, the Cawnpore Club, and other Associations; and whether any steps have been taken to put down these infractions of the law, as was the case in former years?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has no official information on the subject. It is one of the local administration of the law, which in India, as well as in England, forbids lotteries. But the question of the hon. Member will be sent out to the Government of India.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Will the First Lord of the Treasury say when it is intended to proceed with the Indian Councils Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have received some information, but I do not know whether it is entirely correct, that the measure will not be opposed, as at one time it was feared that it would be. If it is possible to take it without opposition, it will be proceeded with on an early day.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: When does the right hon. Gentleman propose to take the Second Reading of the Bill? He will, no doubt, bear in mind that I refrained from moving an Amendment to the Address upon the honourable understanding and almost distinct pledge that the question would be dealt with between Easter and Whitsuntide. This arrangement has been recognised over and over again across the floor of this House.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I acknowledge the accuracy of the statement of the hon. Gentleman, but I am not able to say at this moment when the Second Reading will be taken. We are now in Committee of Supply, and as soon as I can see my way I will intimate to the hon. Gentleman when the Bill will be taken.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will consider the possibility of the Financial Statement for India being presented before the last days of the Session; and whether he is aware that the explanatory Memorandum, which last year was issued on the 15th of May, has not yet been laid upon the Table?

MR. W. H. SMITH: In regard to the Indian Budget, I will endeavour that it shall be taken at an earlier period if possible. I was not aware that the Memorandum referred to by the hon. Member for Northampton had not yet been issued; but I will communicate with my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India on the subject.

Friday, July 11, 1890.

TRADE MARKS.

MR. FARQUHARSON (Dorset, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that at the Greenwich Police Court on 28th June, when Messrs. Kearley and Tonge were convicted for selling tea with a false trade description, under the name of "Pure Ceylon Tea, Blackmoor Vale Estate. Imported by Kearley and Tonge," it was stated in evidence that although there was no such estate in Ceylon as the "Blackmoor Vale Estate," the Registrar of Trade Marks had allowed the name to be registered; and whether steps will be taken to remove the name from the register, and to prevent the registration in future of names calculated to mislead?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol

W.): Messrs. Kearley and Tonge are the successors to a firm trading as Heseltine, Kearley and Tonge, who were registered prior to the passing of the Merchandise Marks Act, as owners of certain two marks which exhibit as "added matter" the words "Blackmoor Vale Estate." Under the Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Acts, 1883-88, it did not devolve on the Comptroller to satisfy himself that the words claimed to be registered as "added matter" were a *bonâ fide* address. Since the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, came into operation, however, the Comptroller has, under the directions of the Board of Trade, made it a practice in cases of the kind to require an explanation of the appearance in connection with a trade mark of an address or name of a place other than that given as the address of the person claiming the registration of the mark, and an application for another tea-label bearing the same words "Blackmoor Vale Estate" has been withdrawn in consequence.

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that in May the Agent to the Governor General for Central India issued a circular, directing that—

> "No Maharajah, Raja, Nawab, or Thakore, within the jurisdiction of the Central Indian Political Agency shall subscribe to the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika,' without the permission of the Agent or Sub-agent;"

and that

> "If any of their subjects holds communication with the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika,' or any other newspaper hostile to the Government, they should make inquiry as to the name, address, age, caste, &c., of the party through the police, and communicate the result to the Resident's office in the course of a month;"

and that

> "On the least intimation of a public meeting or a political movement taking place in their States, the police should make inquiry into the matter;"

and that

> "If anybody is suspected of being an Agent of the Congress, or a secret spy of a Bengalee newspaper, he should be turned out from the State within 24 hours, and the fact should be communicated to the Political Agent; no matter about their States to be communicated to any newspapers;"

and requesting the Native Chiefs not to help the Congress movement, on the ground that

> "The future results of the Congress will be prejudicial to the interests of the Country, as it is an enemy to the British Government;"

and whether such circular was issued by his direction; and, if not, whether he will cause inquiries to be made on the subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): No, Sir; the Secretary of State has no information of any such circular as that referred to in the question of the hon. Gentleman. The question of the hon. Member will be sent to the Government of India.

INDIAN AND COLONIAL POSTAGE.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the reduction in the rates of Indian and Colonial postage, as stated in his Budget speech, will take effect?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am informed that the majority of the Australian colonies have agreed to the reduction, while New Zealand and the Cape Colony have given their assent, subject to certain conditions. Some important points have been raised by the Indian Government which are still under consideration. It is impossible to say when the negotiations will be finally arranged and a date fixed when the reduction of the rate will take effect.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, having regard to the fact that his explanatory Memorandum on the Indian Budget was last year issued on the 15th of May, if he will state the cause of the delay this Session in the issue of such Memorandum; and when will it be circulated to Members?

SIR J. GORST: What the hon. Gentleman is pleased to call an "explanatory Memorandum" is a personal statement which I have been in the habit of circulating for the last year or two for the purpose of shortening my speech on the Indian Budget. It was issued early last year—on the 20th of May, I think—because an earlier discussion of the

Budget was expected. It will be circulated this year a few days before the Committee on the Indian Budget is taken.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in regard to what he says I am pleased to call an "explanatory Memorandum," he did in print not so describe it himself last year?

*SIR J. GORST: The hon. Gentleman must give notice of that question.

CULTIVATING RYOTS IN JUMMOO.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he will state the number of cultivating ryots in Jummoo; and how many of them are, respectively, Moslems and Hindus?

*SIR J. GORST: I am extremely sorry that I cannot answer this question. The last Census was held in 1873, and no record has been taken since.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that he has less information now than he had the other night, when he made a statement upon the subject?

[The question was not answered.]

ADMINISTRATION OF CIVIL JUSTICE.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware that the administration of Civil Justice in India costs Rs. 2,14,27,000, of which all but the small sum of Rs. 140,000 is obtained by taxation of the litigants, and that Bengal litigants are taxed Rs.140,000 more than the total cost of Civil Justice in the province; (2) whether complaints have reached him that the litigants of Bengal who pay more than the whole cost, are unable to get their cases tried, and the zemindars, whom the Government sell up when they do not pay by sunset the appointed amount, cannot obtain the necessary facilities for the recovery of their rents, and that the munsiffs are terribly overworked, and try cases in ill-ventilated huts, and there is much sickness among them in consequence; and (3) whether the Secretary of State will lay upon the Table the correspondence on this subject since 1870 between the High Court of Calcutta and the Government of India upon the requirements of the Bengal Judicial Service, the Government of Bengal, and the Government of India, and the Government of India and the Secretary of State?

*SIR J. GORST: My answer to the first paragraph of the question is that the administration of Civil Justice in India costs approximately Rs. 2,14,27,000 and is defrayed by fees paid by litigants. In Bengal, there is a surplus. In Madras the receipts and charges balance each other; and in the rest of India there is a loss. The total deficit exceeds 12½ lakhs. My answer to the second paragraph of the question is in the negative. In regard to the third paragraph, if the hon. Member will put himself in communication with me, the Secretary of State will consider whether any Papers can be usefully laid upon the Table.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Does the right hon. Gentleman really mean that complaints have not reached him, because it appears on page 93 of the Blue Book on the Indian Financial Statement issued by himself this year, in the last paragraph but one from the bottom of the page, that there is a reference to this matter in the precise words of the question?

*SIR J. GORST: The question was whether complaints have reached the Under Secretary of State. No complaint has reached the Under Secretary of State.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Have any complaints reached the Government of India?

*SIR J. GORST: I am afraid I cannot answer that question without notice.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that a complaint made to the Vice-Regal Council and presented and circulated in a Parliamentary Paper to this House is a matter upon which he has no information?

*SIR J. GORST: The question of the hon. Member was whether certain complaints have reached me, and my answer is in the negative. I do not know what complaints may have reached the Vice-Regal Council. If the hon. Member will give notice he shall have a proper answer to the question.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to give notice that I will take the opportunity of raising the question fully on the Indian Budget.

Monday, July 14, 1890.

HALL-MARKING.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received any communication from the India Office or from the Viceroy of India on the subject of hall-marking; and whether he can now make any statement thereon?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): No, Sir; I have not received any communication from the India Office or from the Viceroy on the subject of hall-marking.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Has the right hon. Gentleman any means of knowing whether such communications have reached the Secretary of State, because my information is that they have?

*MR. GOSCHEN: I made inquiry, and was informed that none have reached. I will make further communication. The matter is a complicated one, but I have no doubt that I shall receive some communication soon.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury to what day he intends to postpone the Indian Councils Bill?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The Indian Councils Bill will stand over until Monday next.

Tuesday, July 15, 1890.

UNCOVENANTED CIVIL SERVANTS.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government will consent to extend the Reference of the recently appointed Select Committee on certain points affecting the rights and claims of Members of the Uncovenanted Civil Service of India, so as to include various grievances of which the Civil Engineers in the employment of the Government of India complain in respect to their promotion, and to the manner in which posts in the Public Works Department are allotted?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The subject raised in the hon. Member's question is rather for the House to consider than the Government.

MR. BRYCE: Will the Government oppose the extension of the Reference if a private Member were to propose it?

SIR J. GORST: That question ought hardly to be addressed to me.

THE BERLIN LABOUR CONFERENCE.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, considering that the International Labour Conference at Berlin is expressly stated in the Emperor of Germany's opening address to be a Conference of European States, that the Letter of the British Plenipotentiaries, of 19th March, 1890, states that "Southern Countries" are interpreted to mean Italy and Spain, and that Sunday rest was a prominent feature of the deliberations and resolutions of the Conference, he can say whether the case of more southern, tropical, and semi-tropical, non-European, and non-Christian countries was in any degree considered by the Conference; and, if not, whether the Secretary of State, in sending the resolutions of the Conference to the Government of India, has drawn attention to that circumstance, and has taken care that the Government is left perfectly free to deal with the matter, with sole reference to the situation and feelings of the natives of India, and is to be in no way hampered by the example of European countries; and whether it is quite understood that the postponement of legislation by the Government of India was entirely spontaneous, and in no way suggested by the Secretary of State, with a view to more stringent legislation founded on European examples?

SIR J. GORST: With regard to the proceedings of the Berlin Conference, the hon. Member will find them all fully stated in the Papers laid before Parliament. The Despatch in which the Secretary of State forwarded the proceedings to the Government of India, will be produced as soon as the correspondence relating thereto is completed. The answer to the last paragraph of the question is in the affirmative. The action of the

Government in India was entirely spontaneous.

BEETROOT SUGAR IN INDIA.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if the Indian Agricultural Department have made any trials with the view of introducing the cultivation of beet and manufacture of beetroot sugar into India, or will do so in view of the present shortness and dearness of sugar in that country necessitating importation?

SIR J. GORST: Yes, Sir; trials have been made at Scharmpore and other places, but they have not been attended so far with any conspicuous success.

THE LAWRENCE ASYLUM PRESS.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what reply has been given to a Memorial addressed to His Excellency Lord Connemara by the printing and cognate trades of Madras, complaining of the competition which they have to sustain with the Lawrence Asylum Press, a *quasi*-Government institution, and protesting against the contemplated extension of its operations; whether the Asylum Press is exempt from the payment of Income Tax; whether it has recently added a new branch, namely, the sale of books on commission; and whether the erection of enormous new premises has commenced, and at what estimated cost?

SIR J. GORST: The whole subject of the Memorial in question and the position of the Lawrence Asylum Press is now under the consideration of the Madras Government. So far as the Secretary of State is aware, no decision has yet been arrived at.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether, in the meantime, the construction of the new premises will be proceeded with?

SIR J. GORST: I think that is a matter in the discretion of the Government of Madras.

CHARGE AGAINST AN INDIAN MAGISTRATE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State is aware that, in the case of "Kapur Chander Lal *v.* Rounuk Thakur and others," in the district of Tirhoot, Mr. Luson, Joint Magistrate, who tried the case after appeal had been entered against his decision, had interpolated the name of a defendant and altered his judgment after he had issued it, and given an attested copy of it both in the original judgment and the copy; though the judgment and the charge-sheet did not contain the name of the prisoner (Maharoj), yet he was sent to gaol, with a warrant containing a specific sentence; whether his attention has been called to the fact that the High Court Judges who heard the appeal declared—

> "We cannot regard the omissions as clerical errors, such as would entitle the Joint Magistrate, under Section 369 of the Code, to make any correction in his judgment or other portion of the record,"

and that—

> "In this case the effect of the alteration has been to make it appear that a man who has never been either charged, convicted, or sentenced, has been duly convicted and sentenced, the alterations so made being after he had repealed;"

whether Mr. Luson is still a Magistrate; whether he has been promoted since the above facts became known to the Government of India; and whether the Secretary of State proposes to take any, and what, action in the matter?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has no information upon the facts alleged in this question. He proposes to send the hon. Member's question to the Government of India.

HALL-MARKING.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can state to the House the tenor of any communications received this year from the Viceroy on the subject of hall-marking, or whether he will lay upon the Table any correspondence on the subject?

SIR J. GORST: No official communication has been received from the Government of India respecting the matter referred to, except a very recent telegram in reply to a Despatch of May 15th. As the correspondence is not yet closed, the Secretary of State cannot at present state the tenor of this telegram.

*MR. **BRADLAUGH**: Will the right hon. Gentleman be surprised to hear that Colonel Ardagh, the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, wrote to say—

> "The case is one in which Imperial interests are involved, and the decision remains with Her Majesty's Government, who have been made fully aware of the entire position of hall-marking."

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; I am not at all surprised to hear that the Private Secretary of the Viceroy has written on the subject.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I did not complain of Colonel Ardagh's letter, but I simply asked whether, as late as the 16th of June, Colonel Ardagh had communicated with the Secretary of State to the effect I have just read.

SIR J. GORST: I stated that the correspondence with the Viceroy on the subject of hall-marking has not yet closed, and, until it is closed, I am not in a position to make any statement.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Then I did not rightly understand the right hon. Gentleman at first to say that there had been no official communication except a telegram?

SIR J. GORST: The hon. Gentleman understood me quite rightly. I said that there had been no official communication except a telegram.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Then there has been official correspondence between the Viceroy of India and the Secretary of State on the subject of hall-marking?

SIR J. GORST: No, Sir.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Then I beg to give notice that upon the Indian Budget, or at some other time, I shall read extracts from the correspondence.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (WEDNESDAYS.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That, for the remainder of the Session, Government Business have priority on Wednesdays."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

*(4.20.) MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton: I think that the right hon. Gentleman, now that he proposes to take the whole time of the House for the rest of the Session, ought to state on what day he intends to take the Indian Council Bill? It has been upon the Paper from week to week, and all I ask now is that the right hon. Gentleman shall fix a day, so that there shall be no manner of doubt hereafter. I do not think that that is an unreasonable request.

MR. W. H. SMITH: With regard to the question of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh,) for my own part I am not able to concur in the view he has expressed. The hon. Gentleman is aware that I am exceedingly anxious that the Indian Council Bill should be considered by the House and passed, but he is also aware that other more urgent business remains to be done. I can only say now, that I hope still it will be possible for the House to take that Bill before the end of the Session, and I can assure the hon. Member that he shall have due notice before it comes on.

Thursday, July 17, 1890.

DECAPITATION OF DACOITS IN BURMA.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the following statement telegraphed from Rangoon by the *Times* correspondent on the 12th inst.:—

> "In accordance with the promise made in Parliament peremptory instructions were issued two years ago by the Government of India forbidding the continuance of the barbarous practice of decapitating Dacoits and carrying the head through the country. This order has been openly disregarded. Two heads, each alleged to be the head of Bohkyawah, have been brought into Ayah within a fortnight. The Local Government have taken no steps to enforce these orders, or punish their subordinates for disobeying them;"

and whether he will inquire into the truth of this statement, and, if it be found true, will take such steps as may be necessary to prevent British administration in Burma being further disgraced by the practices described?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): If the statement of the *Times* correspondent is true, the distinct orders of the Chief Commissioner contained in a Circular of the 5th of March, 1887, have been violated. The Secretary of State will inquire into the truth of the statement

ASSISTANT SURGEONS IN INDIA.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of

State for India whether, under the Circular, No. 50, of the 15th of September, 1868, which lays down strictly the procedure to be followed in the examination of Assistant Surgeons, any power is given to Dr. Hilson, the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, Bengal, to reverse the decision of the Examining Committee, and to order further examination, as was done in the case of the three assistant surgeons who had been regularly examined in May, 1889, before Drs. Coates, Raye, Joubert, Mackenzie, and Saunders?

*SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State thinks that the hon. Member must have been misinformed, because the examination of the two assistant surgeons referred to in the question was held, not under the Circular of the 15th of September, 1868, but under the later orders of the 10th of October, 1880. The Secretary of State will be glad to show the Papers to the hon. Member, and if he thinks them of sufficient importance to be produced they may then be laid on the Table.

NUMBER OF TROOPS IN BURMA.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the number of troops now employed in Upper Burma; and what is their number as compared with the population in India and Upper Burma respectively?

*SIR J. GORST: The number of troops is 11,000; being ·00004 of the population of India, and ·0022 of the population of Burma.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Is there not practically a large Municipal Army in addition to the troops?

*SIR J. GORST: In Burma, as well as in every other civilised community in the world, there are police as well as military.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Are there not police retained independently for military purposes?

*SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; the military in Burma are military, and the police are police.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what is the total cost of the Burmese War up to date?

SIR J. GORST: The cost of the Burmese War up to date is Rs. 4,524,700.

INDIAN MERCHANTS IN THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that a law has recently been promulgated in the Orange Free State prohibiting, after the lapse of two months, the residence and trade in such State of Indian merchants, British subjects; and whether the Government propose to take any action in the matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this question. I have heard that a law has been passed in the Orange Free State prohibiting residence, except by permission, and prohibiting the acquisition of fixed property there in the case of all Asiatic races, other than Cape Malays, but I have not heard that it has been promulgated. The period of grace in the draft law was 12, and not two months. The High Commissioner, acting under instructions from the High Commissioner, has made, and is making, representations to the Orange Free State Government against the provisions of the law.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I received a telegram late last night signed "Shepstone," from Durban, stating that a law was promulgated on the 15th prohibiting trade and residence of Indian merchants which is to take effect in two months. That is my only ground for putting the question.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, July 18, 1890.

ARMY DISCIPLINE IN INDIA.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY, in rising to ask the Secretary of State for India what measures the Indian Government has taken to improve the discipline of the regiments recently quartered at Dum Dum; and what compensation it has made to the widow of the man shot by one of four soldiers who went out of barracks without leave on the night of the 6th November last; also to ask the

Secretary of State for India if he will take steps to provide temperance canteens for all barracks and European military quarters in India as accessible to the soldiers as the canteens for intoxicating liquors, said: My Lords, the effects of discipline at the Dum Dum barracks to which I have called the attention of the Secretary of State for India consist, in the first place, in the existence of too great facilities for the soldiers getting out of barracks at all hours of the night; and, secondly, for obtaining ball cartridge and regimental rifles when off duty. Taking advantage of this culpable laxity three soldiers of the Leinster Regiment, named O'Hara, Bellew, and M'Dermot, and a soldier of the Buffs, named Goldsborough, agreed to go out on the night of November 6 last pig shooting. They left the barracks about 11 o'clock p.m. with two rifles and 10 or 11 rounds of ball cartridge, as stated by one of the witnesses, and the number of empty and unused cartridges picked up in their tracks amounted to that number. These cartridges were obtained by the soldiers of the Leinster Regiment. They were able to leave the barracks unobserved. It appears there were only two sentries—one at the Guard Room and the other at the Quarter-Master's stores, and the Dum Dum barracks are not surrounded by any enclosure or spiked railing. It has also been stated there was inefficiency or irregularity in the matter of roll calls and check rolls at Dum Dum. These statements have been contradicted in the Press, but if the statements are well founded they will prove that further precautions are necessary for the maintenance of discipline. The four soldiers having left barracks proceeded to a village near Dum Dum. They visited two or three houses or huts, knocked up the inmates, and forced them to give them toddy. They then broke into a dispensary and stole a bottle of Eno's fruit salt, but unfortunately they did not drink it at a time when it might have sobered them, and thus prevented the crime which was afterwards committed. They then came to the house of one Sheikh Salim, and found him asleep in his verandah. O'Hara, as was stated at the trial, dragged Salim out by the arm, took him away to a pond near his house, pushed him in, and then knelt down and deliberately fired at him. The man threw up his arms and screamed, and the four soldiers then left him. The wounded man was, however, taken home, but he died before dawn. The bullet, it was found, went in at his right collar-bone and came out at his left side, and passed through his left arm. The four soldiers then amused themselves by firing shots at bottles or jugs suspended from a tree, and then returned to barracks, one on foot and the other three in a country cart, in which they had compelled a man to give them a lift. The authors of this crime remained undiscovered for a month. Then the Magistrate promised a pardon to anyone concerned in the crime, who was not the actual murderer, who would give evidence, and Goldsborough and M'Dermot then gave information against O'Hara and Bellew. On April 14 O'Hara and Bellew were put on their trial before Mr. Justice Norris. Bellew was in the course of the trial discharged, and O'Hara was found guilty and sentenced to death. The High Court of Calcutta was, however, set in motion to inquire into the sentence, with the result that the conviction was quashed, on the ground that Goldsborough, the witness, was also an accomplice, and that parts of his evidence were of no avail—not having been corroborated. O'Hara was discharged from the Army, and accordingly went away scot-free. This was unfortunate, because the day before O'Hara was tried another man, a shopkeeper, was tried by the same Judge, Mr. Justice Norris, for having killed a doorkeeper in Calcutta, who had given him no offence, by running him through the lungs with the sword of a sword-stick, and he died almost immediately. For this unprovoked murder he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Now, I think, my Lords, it is for the Secretary of State for India to consider what effect this disregard for their lives must have upon the natives of India. Nor are these the only cases which have occurred recently? There have been two or three other cases of natives of India in the North-West who have been injured by soldiers with almost equal impunity. It may also be asked why these four soldiers were not put on their trial by Court Martial for the military offence of breaking barracks and appropriating Government ammunition. This was purely a military offence and had nothing to do with the murder, so that the maxim *non bis in idem* would not apply in that case. It has also been stated that the decision of the High Court of Calcutta was not altogether correct with regard to the evidence of the man Goldsborough, because the witness was not necessarily an accomplice, since they all went out on the spree, not with the object of committing murder. Of course, if they had gone out on an expedition to commit burglary then he would have been an accomplice in the crime which afterwards occurred, because burglary necessarily may lead to murder. I will now come to the question which I have put on the Notice Paper with regard to what compensation is intended to be made to the widow and child of Sheikh Salim, whose death was caused by these soldiers and who had been begging since his murder. This marauding expedition in search of toddy was not the first subject of complaint against soldiers of the Leinster Regiment. The jury who tried O'Hara made a subscription among themselves for the relief of the widow, and Mr. Justice Norris commented very severely upon the fact of Sheikh Salim's widow and child having been left without any means of support. One reason, in fact, why the Judge did not inflict a heavier sentence on the man who had run the other native through with his sword-stick was because the firm who employed him had made some compensation to the widow. I now come to the last question on the Notice Paper, and I hope my noble Friend the Secretary of State will be able to state that he has come to some decision upon the question of promoting temperance in the Army of India by establishing temperance canteens in places as accessible to the soldiers as the other canteens. The tragedy at Dum Dum has emphasised the necessity of such a reform. This marauding expedition was hatched in the canteen. Mischief constantly occurs from the soldiers going to the canteens and quarrelling with one another when they begin drinking. On grounds of economy alone the Indian Administration is bound to provide temperance canteens, and to do its utmost to check the drinking of spirits — for the purpose of diminishing the number of soldiers who from that cause primarily have to be invalided home. I believe Sir Frederick Roberts has made some reforms of that kind with regard to the Madras Army; and if that is the case, I hope the Secretary of State will be able to say what he has done in the matter. The noble Viscount will remember that two years ago a plan was published of an Indian Camp comprising a temperance canteen; but I think that must have been a private missionary canteen, for it was relegated to the further end of the camp, while its alcoholic competitor was in the centre. Spirit drinking in the tropics ought to be discouraged in every way possible, and Government ought to provide means for enabling soldiers to be more careful of their health. Not only is it necessary in the tropics; Lord Wolseley said that in his Red River Expedition the soldiers had no spirits, but, though they were constantly wet and had to endure great fatigue, there was no sickness amongst them, and no discontent. This question of temperance canteens has a direct bearing on the murders I have described; but I do not wish to withdraw the attention of the Secretary of State from the want of discipline manifested in the circumstances attending the fatal case of this man who was shot by these soldiers. I will make a formal Motion for Papers, because it would be of no use bringing the matter forward if my noble Friend is unwilling to grant them; and I will ask him, therefore, as soon as he receives any reply from the Indian Government, to lay it on the Table of the House.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): With regard to the breach of discipline in the particular regiments to which my noble Friend has alluded, I am afraid I cannot give him any information to-day; but in consequence of a question which was asked by Sir George Campbell in the other House some time ago, I called for a full Report of the circumstances to which my noble Friend has alluded; but there has not yet been received an answer from the Government of India. For the same reason I am unable to say whether any compensation has been given to the widow of the person who was unfortunately killed on that night. With regard to the last question of the noble Lord, I can give him a much more satisfactory answer, for we have long ago anticipated all he desires. There are now temperance canteens in all corps and batteries in India; they form part of the regimental institutes. The rules for temperance canteens are applicable to all India, and in those rules the use or issue of spirits is discouraged, and every facility given for the use of non-intoxicating drinks. The subject is one which is receiving the constant attention of the Government of India. I have no Papers from the Government of India, and until we receive them it is impossible to say anything about them.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, July 18, 1890.

POLITICAL AIDE-DE-CAMP TO THE SECRETARY FOR INDIA.

Mr. BIRRELL (Fife, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what are the duties and salary of the Political Aide-de-Camp to the Secretary of State for India; out of what funds such salary is paid; and, if the same is paid out of the Revenues raised in India, whether, in the interests of Indian taxpayers, he will consider the advisability of abolishing the office; and whether the holder of such office is under any, and what, supervision so far as regards the effective discharge of the duties (if any) appertaining to such office?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The duties of the Political Aide-de-Camp to the Secretary of State are: To attend on Native Princes visiting this country; to represent the Secretary of State when natives are presented at Court; to exercise a general supervision over the welfare of natives, students, and others sent to this country by the Government of India, or recommended to the good offices of the Secretary of State; to make recommendations to the Secretary of State as to the disposal of the cases of destitute natives who apply for relief to the India Office. His salary is £500 with £300 for contingencies. He is paid from the Revenues of India. The Secretary of State does not contemplate the abolition of the office. The Political Aide-de-Camp is like other members of the establishment of the India Office, under the control of the Secretary of State.

THE FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS ACTS IN INDIA.

Mr. T. HARROP SIDEBOTTOM (Stalybridge): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the stringent manner in which it is thought necessary to administer the Factories and Workshops Acts in this country, he can state when our Indian fellow-subjects are likely to receive some share of the benefits of similar legislation, however slight?

*Sir J. GORST: Yes, Sir; the Secretary of State hopes that our Indian fellow-subjects will receive some share in the benefits of the factory legislation which has been so beneficial in this country.

TRANSIT DUTY ON INDIAN SPUN YARN.

Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Chinese Government have by an Imperial Edict raised the transit duty on Indian spun yarn by 3·10 dollars a bale; and whether the Government have any official cognisance of this new arrangement?

*Sir J. GORST: No, Sir; this is not a matter which has come under the official cognisance of the Secretary of State, but he has reason to believe that the proper Department is making inquiry.

Monday, July 21, 1890.

INDIA COUNCIL BILLS.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the *Under Secretary of State* for India whether (1) *it is the case that* for some *time past India Council Bills* have been sold *much beyond the average monthly rate*; (2) *whether this was* done to take advantage of the higher exchange caused by anticipated silver legislation in America; (3) whether the present rate of exchange is much higher than that at which those surplus sales of Council Bills were made; (4) whether the Indian Treasury has thereby sustained a considerable loss; (5) and whether he will consider the advisability of delaying action as far as possible and await the full effect of the passage of the American Silver Bill, in view of the possibility of a rise to about 1s. 11d. per rupee, the old rate of exchange before silver demonetisation took place?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is in the negative. India Council Bills have not been sold for some time past much beyond the average monthly rate. The answer to the second part of the question is also in the negative. The expectation of legislation in the United States has not influenced the amount of the sales. The answer to the third paragraph is that the present rate is higher than it has been for the last five years. The answer to the fourth paragraph is in the negative. There has been no surplus sale, and consequently no loss. As regards the last paragraph, the Secretary of State cannot delay such sale of bills as is necessary to meet the wants of the Service on the chance of a future rise in the value of silver.

THE SALT TAX.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what was the total amount paid into the Indian Exchequer from the Salt Tax during the last financial year; and what, during the fifteen weeks that have elapsed of the current financial year, is the amount received from the sale of bills and transfers over and above the estimate of the Finance Minister of India owing to the rate of exchange having risen higher than his estimate of the probable exchangeable value of the rupee?

*SIR J. GORST: The gross receipts from the Salt Tax for 1889-90 were 8,192,500 tens of rupees. The answer to the second question of the hon. Member is that the amount received during the current financial year from the sale of bills in excess of the estimate is £437,000.

*MR. HOYLE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the present rate of exchange will yield a surplus of £2,500,000?

*SIR J. GORST: I must ask for notice of that question.

THE BURMA RUBY MINES COMPANY.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the statement made by the Chairman of the Burma Ruby Mines Company, Limited, at the ordinary general meeting of shareholders of that company, held on the 16th instant, to the effect that the Board had that day discussed the propriety of applying to the Government of India to relieve them of the payment of four lakhs of rupees per annum agreed on as the price of their concession, on the ground that the operations of the company had not resulted profitably; and whether he will undertake that no remission of this portion of the Indian Revenue shall take place without the House of Commons being previously informed of the fact?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has received no official communication on the subject, but he has seen a newspaper report of the meeting. The Secretary of State cannot give the pledge suggested. But no such application has been made either to him or, so far as he knows, to the Government of India, and he is not aware of any grounds upon which the rent of the Ruby Mines could be justly remitted.

THE INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in case Her Majesty's Government find themselves unable to deal in the present Session with the question raised in connection with the first part of the Indian Councils Bill, they will consider the expediency of trying, at least, to carry through the non-contentious later portions of the Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I still entertain the hope that the House will deal with the Bill as a whole in the course of the present Session.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: Will the right hon. Gentleman say to when he intends to postpone it from to-day, as I notice the Bill appears on the Orders of the Day?

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: If the hon. Gentleman will be so good as to allow the Orders of the Day to be called on we shall then be able to answer the question.

Tuesday, July 22, 1890.

RATE OF EXCHANGE.

MR. KING (Hull, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the fact that since March last, when the official rate of exchange between the Indian and Imperial Governments was fixed at 1s. 5d. to the rupee, the rupee has risen in value to over 1s. 7d., whereas the Indian Government is, to its great profit, now paying its servants their family remittances, furlough, and pensions at 1s. 5d., the Secretary of State will now arrange, since it is practically certain that the rupee will not fall in value during the current financial year, to give the benefit of the rise in exchange to its servants by settling with them at the current rate?

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies to the question, I wish to ask a further question on the same subject, of which I have given him private notice. I wish to know whether he is aware that more than one-half of the Indian Uncovenanted Civil servants pensioned in England receive pensions of less than £200 a year; and is he aware that a nominal pension of £200 a year is reduced by the loss of the exchange to about £135, although the Government get about £160 for the same sum at the current rate?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA** (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In reply to the question of the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. King), I have to say that the Secretary of State cannot alter the official rate of exchange after it has been once fixed. It is applied to very large transactions, amounting nearly to £1,000,000. In reply to the hon. Member for North Kensington (Sir Roper Lethbridge), I have no doubt that the figures he gives are correct, but such considerations cannot affect the current rate.

***MR. KING**: Is it not the fact that since the official rate was fixed a Silver Bill has been passed in America, which practically ensures what I state in my question, that the rupee will not fall in value during the current financial year?

***SIR J. GORST**: I am sorry to state that the Secretary has no information of what passes in the United States.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): If I put a Motion on the Paper for a Return of the amount of profit which the Government make under this head, will the right hon. Gentleman oppose it?

***SIR J. GORST**: I must have notice of that question.

MR. MAC NEILL: Then I will repeat it to-morrow.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India when the Paper which he last year described as an explanatory Memorandum on the Indian Financial Statement will be circulated; and if he can say on what date the Indian Budget Statement will be made?

***SIR J. GORST**: The Paper to which the hon. Gentleman refers will be circulated a few days before the Indian Budget was taken. In regard to the last paragraph of the question of the hon. Member, I have to say that I can neither foretell nor fix the day upon which it will be for the convenience of the House to discuss the Indian Finances.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will remember that last year he gave us two months to consider this Paper.

***SIR J. GORST**: The hon. Gentleman is in error. I did not give two months to consider the Paper. I circulated the Paper when I thought the Indian Budget was coming on, but the House postponed the consideration of it.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can give the House any information as to the day upon which the Indian Budget is likely to be taken?

***THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY** (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I am afraid that further progress must be made with the Bills now before the House and with Supply before the Indian Budget can be taken.

THE AMIR OF AFGHANISTAN.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any and what communication has been recently addressed by the Viceroy of India to the Amir of Afghanistan relating to the treatment of some of the Amir's subjects; if he can state what reply has been received from the Amir; and whether he will lay Papers upon the Table?

*SIR J. GORST: Yes, Sir; certain communications have taken place, but it would not be to the public interest to produce them.

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £258,400, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Salaries and Miscellaneous Charges of the War Office, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891."

*(8.9.) MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I wish to bring before the Committee a question affecting the Secretary for War and also the Under Secretary for India. It relates to the charge for military stores made by the War Office upon the Government of India. It appears that a dispute has been going on, I am sorry to say altogether for nearly 20 years. During the past year an attempt has been made to submit it to arbitration, but the Secretary of State for India has refused to let it be so submitted. The allegation made on the part of the Government of India, as far as we can judge from the accounts submitted to this House, is that charges of an exorbitant nature have been made against the Government of India for stores. The Government of India, as I understand it, have never assented to that price, and have paid on account of it, as I understand, only something like 90 per cent., leaving the 10 per cent. in suspense. It surely is most unbusinesslike, even if it be true—and I believe it is not the case that the 90 per cent. represents the real cost—that year after year there should be a discrepancy in the accounts.

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Mr. Courtney, I do not know whether I am right in asking you whether this discussion in regard to the issue of warlike stores should not have taken place on Vote 6, which deals with warlike stores?

*MR. BRADLAUGH: On the point of order, Sir, I wish to submit that I am attacking the Secretary for War for having refused to submit the claim to arbitration. It is on that ground that I am basing my statement to the Committee, the facts I am using being merely illustrations used to enable the Committee to understand my complaint. I shall be quite content if the Secretary for War will now say that during the coming year some steps shall be taken to put an end to an undignified dispute between two great Departments of the State, and in which it is alleged that overcharges are made against the Government of India. I was about to appeal to the Under Secretary for India (Sir J. Gorst) on behalf of the starving population of whom he was speaking the other night, to state the facts and the steps taken to try and induce the Secretary for War to submit the question to arbitration.

THE CHAIRMAN: It seems to be a question of policy as to the mode of settling the dispute. If that be so, it is debatable upon this Vote.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: It is a rather long story, and I have no wish to take up the time of the Committee if the Secretary for War will state that the matter shall be dealt with by arbitration during the next six months or something of that kind. There is a real *bonâ fide* case. The auditor of the India Office has reported directly against the War Office, and I shall have to appeal to the Under Secretary for India to place before the Committee the written opinion of the auditor on the subject. If the Secretary for War will not say that the matter shall be submitted to arbitration it will be my duty to submit the whole case to the Committee, and, if necessary, to move a reduction of the Vote. It is really a rather gross matter, and will entail the production of a large amount of detail.

*(8.13.) MR. E. STANHOPE: The hon. Member may or may not be aware that there are a number of outstanding questions between the War Office and the India Office. Some questions of the kind were settled by a tribunal over which Lord Northbrook presided, and which is practically a standing Committee, meeting from time to time. Other questions are settled by the Goverment as a whole. The Cabinet has perfect competence to decide such questions, and it does decide them as they arise. I cannot give the hon. Member any other answer than that.

*(8.15.) MR. BRADLAUGH: That is not sufficient, because it appears that the Under Secretary for India asked the Secretary for War to submit the question to arbitration, and that request was declined by the War Office. I appeal to the leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) to say whether he intends at this period of the Session to force on a Debate which must be lengthy, in which I admit my information must necessarily be incomplete, and in which I must ask the Secretary for War to give me further information. What reason can there be for not submitting this to some tribunal? I do not want to waste the time of the Committee in the matter. We find the Under Secretary for India saying "Lord Cross is unable to withdraw the claim." What is the claim? It is one, rightly or wrongly made, that the War Office have been overcharging the Government of India? I do not wish to ask the Committee to express any opinion on that, but I shall ask them to do so if I do not get an assurance that this matter will be made the subject of an investigation. I ask for an assurance that there will be some kind of arbitration, so that there may be no need for me to ask the Committee for an opinion.

*(8.17.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I am anxious at this period of the Session to avoid any unnecessary discussion, but I cannot pass by the observations of the hon. Member. It is utterly impossible for me to admit that anything unjust has taken place.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman to admit that.

*MR. E. STANHOPE: If anything we have been too indulgent. All this has arisen because last year the Indian Government were treated very leniently, and were not charged the full value for the stores. As, however, there appears to be a difference between the two Departments, the Government will undertake that it shall be looked into and settled.

*(8.18.) MR. BRADLAUGH: And in the event of the two Departments not coming to an agreement will there be some arbitrament between them?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: No; the Government must settle their own affairs.

*(8.18.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The Government, of course, are responsible for settling all differences that may arise between two Departments of the Government. I will undertake, on behalf of my right hon. Friend and the Government, that a fair settlement of this case shall be arrived at between the two Departments. There shall be an inquiry and a settlement.

*(8.18.) MR. BRADLAUGH: I will be satisfied with that, merely adding that if, unfortunately, no settlement should be arrived at, or no settlement should be in course of being arrived at by some investigation, I will take the earliest opportunity that next Session affords of bringing the subject before the House.

Thursday, July 24, 1890.

RATE OF EXCHANGE.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State for India will, at the close of the financial year, grant a Return showing the amount of profit accruing during the year to the Indian Government from paying its servants their family remittances, furlough, and pensions at the rate of 1s. 5d., while the current rate of exchange is much higher, being to-day 1s. 7¼d?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State wishes to be allowed to defer his answer to this question until the close of the financial year. He cannot tell until then whether any profit will accrue or not.

SIR R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): Arising out of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, may I ask him if we are to assume that Indian Civil Service pensions are really to be reduced from £200 to £135 by the loss in the exchange, so that these officers are unable to provide adequately for the feeding, clothing, and education of their children, while a profit continues to be made by the Government from the same transaction?

SIR J. GORST: I must remind the hon. Gentleman that at this moment there is a Committee sitting upstairs which is engaged in considering the matter, and it would be very disrespectful to that Committee if I were to express any opinion.

MR. C. WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if his attention has been drawn to a statement in the *Daily News* of the 23rd instant, as follows:—

> "Indian Government expenditure in England is over 200 million rupees per annum. If the rupee exchanges for 1s. 7d., instead of 1s. 5d., the difference of 2d. per rupee to the Indian Exchequer is £1,750,000;"

and, if so, is it true that a rise of 2d. in the rate of exchange is a clear gain to the Indian Government of £1,750,000?

SIR J. GORST: Yes, Sir; but, so far, the average rate actually realised has been only 1s. 5¾d.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

*MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury to what date he intends to postpone the Indian Councils Bill, and whether it will really be taken on the date to which it is postponed?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: We propose to take it on Thursday next, and if we find that we are unable to take it then another day will be named.

Friday, July 25, 1890.

SALE OF BILLS AND TELEGRAPHIC TRANSFERS.

MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities), on behalf of Mr. JARVIS: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what were the sales by the Indian Council of bills and telegraphic transfers during the months of March, April, and May of this year, and also the sales during the corresponding months of last year?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The sales of bills and transfers during March, April, and May this year were Rs.8,29,00,000, against Rs.6,55,48,015 in the corresponding months of 1889.

INDIAN EXCHEQUER AND THE RATE OF EXCHANGE.

MR. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India by what amount in sterling does the Indian Exchequer benefit by an advance in exchange of one penny per rupee per annum; and if the Indian Council is not receiving for bills at the present time 3d. per rupee more than was obtained when silver was selling at 3s. 6d. per ounce or under; and, if not 3d. per rupee, how much is the present rate higher than the lowest rate?

SIR J. GORST: The gain produced by the rise of 1d. varies with the rate of exchange. The gain by a rise from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 7d. is Rx.1,100,000. Council bills are fetching 3d. per rupee more than when silver was at 3s. 6d. per ounce.

MR. CALEB WRIGHT: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the second part of the question.

SIR J. GORST: The answer to the second part of the question is, Yes.

Monday, July 28, 1890.

OPEN AIR PREACHING IN CALCUTTA.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that a bye-law has been just passed by the Calcutta Municipality, at the instigation of its Chairman, Sir Henry Harrison, prohibiting preaching in the open squares of Calcutta; whether he is aware that a similar attempt was made nine years ago and failed, being then declared a violation of Common Law; that Hindoos, Brahmists, as well as Christians, have long been in the habit of preaching in the open air without let or hindrance; and that perfect quiet and order has prevailed at their assemblies; whether this prohibition, if not repealed, may be extended all over India, and would virtually prohibit the preaching of Christianity over a great part of the country, as much of the work is done in the open air; and whether he will call the attention of the Government of India to the subject?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Secretary of State has no official information on this subject, which is one of Local Government; but he understands that the bye-law in question is now under the consideration of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, with whom the allowance or dis-allowance in the first instance rests.

EMPLOYMENT OF LABOUR IN MINES, &c.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if the Government of India accepts, and will enforce in respect to the employment of labour in mines and in factories, the humane decisions to which Her Majesty's Government agreed at the International Conference recently held in Berlin?

*SIR J. GORST: The Report and proceedings of the Berlin International Conference have been sent to the Government of India for consideration with the Factory Bill now before the Indian Legislature. The Secretary of State cannot say how far the detailed recommendations will be applied to India, until the Government of India report their views.

MR. HOYLE: Does the right hon. Gentleman expect an answer soon?

*SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; from my experience of the Government of India some time will elapse before an answer is received.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): As we are now arriving at the close of the Session, may I ask the First Lord of the Treasury when we are to have the Indian Budget?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I am unable to say. I wish it was in my power to say when the close of the Session would arrive.

DACOITY IN BURMA.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for India as to statements which appear in the newspapers this morning, that a certain dacoit taken in Burma had been promised that if he surrendered he would not be executed, but, notwithstanding that promise, he is now to be executed by the authorities. Is there any truth in the statement?

SIR J. GORST: I must ask for notice of the question.

SIR W. LAWSON: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will promptly inquire into it.

EAST INDIA (CASE OF THREE MEDICAL OFFICERS).

Address for—

"Copies of, or Extracts from, Correspondence relating to the case of three Assistant Surgeons dismissed from the Bengal Establishment."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Tuesday, July 29, 1890.

THE INDIGO RYOTS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any reply has been received to the Despatch sent to the Government of India as to the Indigo ryots; and whether he can now consent to the Return asked for?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Despatch was sent out on June 19th, and no reply has yet been received. The Secretary of State cannot tell whether the Return can be given till he is informed by the Government of India.

THE BURMESE DACOIT BOH YAN MYUN.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he has inquired into and can give any information regarding the statement of the *Times* correspondent at Rangoon, to the effect that a notorious

Dacoit leader, having surrendered on a promise of pardon given him, has nevertheless been "sentenced to death after a trial conducted in an unsatisfactory manner?"

SIR J. GORST: The statements of the *Times* correspondent at Rangoon do not generally commend themselves for accuracy to the Secretary of State, but in this case he has inquired by telegraph whether there is any truth in the statement.

THE AMEER OF AFGHANISTAN.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any engagement has been entered into by Her Majesty's Government, or by the Government of India, with the Ameer of Afghanistan, guaranteeing the integrity of his north-western frontier as delimited in accordance with the Protocol between Russia and this country of 10th September, 1885; and whether any further undertaking has been added to that contained in a Letter delivered to the Ameer on 20th July, 1880, the terms of which were repeated to him by the Government of India on 22nd February and 16th June, 1883, whereby the British Government reserved to itself the right to be the sole judge as to the occasion, nature, and extent of any military aid which it might grant to him in repelling foreign invasion?

SIR J. GORST: The engagements of the British Government with the present Ameer of Afghanistan will be found recorded at page 40 of the Return, Afghanistan No. 1, of 1881. They have not undergone any modification since that date.

EAST INDIA (CIVIL SERVANTS).

Report, with Minutes of Evidence, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 327.]

Wednesday, July 30, 1890.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Will the Indian Councils Bill be taken to-morrow.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No Sir.

Thursday, July 31, 1890.

CULTIVATORS IN KOLABA AND THANA.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has seen in the *Times of India*, of 9th April, 1890, a Resolution of the Government of Bombay, relating to trees on occupied lands in Kolaba, in paragraph 30, where it is stated—

> "The same terms as are being offered in Thana under paragraphs 9, 10, and 13 of Government Resolution, No. 2447, dated 8th April, 1890, may for this purpose be offered in Kolaba;"

whether what purports to be Government Resolution No. 2447, dealing with trees in occupied lands, Thana, has been published in the *Times of India* of 12th April; whether he will state what were the terms mentioned in paragraphs 9, 10, and 13, of the Resolution No. 2447, of 8th of April, and whether they contained important concessions to cultivators; whether he will state why this Resolution has not been published in the *Government Gazette;* and whether the Government of Bombay having refused, in their letters Nos. 3024 and 4163, to supply copies of the Resolution to the Forest Association of Thana, he will give instructions for the publication of the Resolution, as framed by Lord Reay's Government, so that the cultivators in the Kolaba and Thana districts may obtain the benefits which it was intended they should derive?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The answer to the first paragraph of the question of the hon. Member is in the affirmative. The Secretary of State has seen the Resolution from paragraph 3, and not 30, of which the quotation is taken. The answer to the second paragraph is in the negative. The other Resolution, No. 2447, has not been published. In answer to the third paragraph, I have to say that the Secretary of State cannot state the terms of the Resolution, because the document in question is marked confidential. The Secretary of State is not aware whether the Government of Bombay has refused to publish the document, nor, if so, on what grounds. The Secretary of State is not aware of the refusal of the Government of Bombay to publish the Resolution, and the matter seems to be one of local administration, with which, as at present advised, he should not interfere. The hon. Member's question will be sent to India in ordinary course.

THE BURMESE DACOIT BOH YAN MYUN.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he has yet received any answer to his inquiries into the case of the Dacoit Boh Yan Myun's trial in Burmah?

*SIR J. GORST: No telegram has reached me on the subject.

SIR W. LAWSON: When does the right hon. Gentleman expect to hear?

*SIR J. GORST: Probably by Monday next; inquiry is being made.

INDIAN MIDLAND RAILWAY.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Indian Government documents relating to the acquisition of the lands and material in certain of the states of Bundelkund, Central India, for the purposes of the Indian Midland Railway, numbered respectively 357, 359, 272, 2,550, 686, 584, and 756, of 1886, concerned all the States through which the railway runs, and covered the acquisition of all lands, and the purchase of timbers, stones, &c.; whether in the engagements entered into under these documents a sum of about five lakhs of rupees have been claimed by certain chiefs of States in Bundelkund; whether, notwithstanding such engagements, Mr. Henvey, the Agent of the Governor General of Central India, has recommended that no compensation be paid to the chiefs, on the ground that collateral advantages may hereafter accrue to them; and whether the Government will lay upon the Table the Papers relating to the transactions entered into with any and all of the chiefs of States in Bundelkund, through which the Indian Midland Railway runs, by the contractors for the railway, or by any other parties in connection with the railway.

*SIR J. GORST: With the exception of No. 272, which was the subject of my reply on the 3rd of July, none of the documents referred to in the question can be traced. The question will be sent to the Government of India in ordinary course.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Gentleman has not mentioned what is to be done with the Indian Councils Bill. We ought to know the intentions of the Government with regard to that measure.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Could not the Bill be taken on Saturday, instead of the Police Bill, which has never been discussed in Committee, and to bring on which would be very inconvenient to Members, as it affects nearly every constituency?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am afraid the Indian Councils Bill must be postponed until after Supply, and if it is possible to take it during the stages of the Appropriation Bill the Government will be glad to do so.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: If the Bill is left to the end of the Session it will be extremely unfair to hon. Members interested in it, and will, moreover, be an absolute breach of the promise given by the First Lord of the Treasury in the Debate on the Address.

Friday, August 1, 1890.

INDIAN RAILWAYS.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is purposed to discontinue the construction of railways on the metre gauge; whether a proposal has been made to change existing metre-gauge lines throughout India into broad-gauge lines; whether the Secretary of State has recently received a Despatch on the subject from the Government of India; whether he has seen the estimate of General Trevor, C.S.I., Chairman of the Southern Mahratta Railway, that this reversal of policy will probably cost about £20,000,000, as the change alone will cost £3,500 a mile; and whether he will lay Papers upon the Table relating to that subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question is, No. The answer to the second paragraph is, No. To the third paragraph the answer is, Yes. The Secretary of State has received a Despatch on the question of the gauges from the Government of India. The answer to the fourth paragraph is, No, and to the last paragraph, Yes, when the correspondence is complete.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean that he is not aware that the reversal of policy will entail an enormous loss, amounting to many millions sterling?

SIR J. GORST: The hon. Member refers to the fourth paragraph of the question. My answer was, No. That means that the Secretary of State has not seen the estimates of General Trevor.

Monday, August 4, 1890.

EAST AFRICA—THE INDIAN ABKARI (EXCISE) SYSTEM.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he is aware that it is reported that the British East African Company purposes introducing the Indian Abkari (Excise) system in Eastern Africa; and whether, in view of the condemnation of that system in India by this House last Session, the Government will interfere to prevent such a course being adopted?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: We are not aware of the report referred to by the hon. Member, but the policy of Her Majesty's Government, in conjunction with that of other Powers, is to check and restrain the importation of ardent spirits among the natives of Africa.

THE BURMESE DACOIT BOH YAN MYUN.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can now give the House any information as to the capture and trial of the Burmese Dacoit Boh Yan Myun?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): With the permission of the House, I will read a telegram which has been received by my noble Friend from the Viceroy, dated August 1st.

"Yours, 29th. Regarding Yan Myun Dacoit. Following received from Chief Commissioner of Burma: 'When proclamation recently issued in Myingyan district, offering free pardon to lesser dacoits, Yan Mynu specially excepted by name, and reward 5,000 rupees offered for his apprehension. On the 28th of May last Macdonald, sub-divisional officer, heard Yan Myun meditated surrender, and sent out a pongyi to communicate with him. Macdonald says no promise was made, but we';—

I presume he means "he"—

'told him if he came in Authorities would probably show him mercy and spare his life. Macdonald also told Pongyi if Yan Myun surrendered he would plead for his life. Yan Myun surrendered two days later, having received no further promise. He has been tried by Deputy Commissioner of District, and sentenced to death, and he appealed to Judicial Commissioner. Appeal not yet decided, and sentence not carried out. Yan Myun first alleged he surrendered on the understanding that Macdonald would do his utmost to get his life spared; subsequently that he received a promise that his life would be spared, but would have surrendered anyhow, owing to constant terror of being murdered. If Judicial Commissioner confirms sentence, it will not be executed until Chief Commissioner has considered case. Sir Charles Crosthwaite (who is Chief Commissioner of Burma) states that we can rely upon him to prevent even apparent breach of faith.'"

ASSAM TEA PLANTATIONS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the difference in the mortality between coolies employed on the tea plantations of Assam, under the Act of 1882, and those not under the Act, and to the fact that the average mortality of the coolies under the Act is double that of those not under it; whether he is aware that the non-Act labourers are free agents, who take service on healthy plantations, while Act labourers are imported from a distance under long contracts, and are often placed on unhealthy plantations, and that Act labourers are often engaged by contractors for unhealthy places, in entire ignorance of the conditions of plantation life; whether he has observed that the death rate on some of those unhealthy plantations ranges from 200 to 270 per

1,000, or eight times the average mortality of Assam; that on two plantations in 1884 more than half the coolies died; that many of the coolies desert and perish in the jungle; and that many others come back from the tea gardens crippled for life, and have to depend on charity; and whether the Government of India, in the investigation they are now making into the subject, will consider the desirability of ceasing to enforce labour contracts entered into for a term of years?

*SIR J. GORST: The answer to the first question is, Yes. The attention of the Secretary of State has been frequently called to this matter by questions in Parliament, and it has been pointed out that such questions are suggested by those who desire to substitute a system of free immigration for the safeguards of the Act of 1882. The answer to the second question is also in the affirmative. The Government of India consider that the higher mortality among the labourers under the Act is to a great extent accounted for by the fact that these are chiefly new comers, while the non-Act labourers are generally old hands who are seasoned and acclimatised. As to the second paragraph of the question, it is one which, as I have before pointed out to the House, is based on isolated facts picked out of the official Reports of many years past. It gives a most erroneous impression of the actual state of the tea gardens. The answer to the fourth question is, Yes. This is one of the points which is engaging the attention of the Government.

GAOL MORTALITY IN BENGAL.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, while the average town mortality in Bengal in 1889 was 25·03 per 1,000, the gaol death rate in the same Presidency was 45·8 per 1,000, and in other parts of India much higher, attaining in some instances to 120 per 1,000; whether the regulations under which Indian gaols are conducted were framed by gaol officials; and whether the Secretary of State will direct the attention of the Government of India to this excessive mortality, with a view to the adoption of means to secure its reduction to at least the average mortality of the district in which each gaol is situated?

*SIR J. GORST: The official Returns for 1889 have not yet been received. In 1888 the death-rate in gaols was 44·7 for Bengal, and 33·1 for the whole of India, which was a satisfactory reduction from 35·6, the death-rate of the preceding year. The regulations are framed by the Government of India. The attention of the Secretary of State and Government of India has for some time past been directed to the mortality in gaols; and the Government of India is now engaged, in concert with the Local Governments, in considering suggestions for endeavouring to diminish the amount.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, August 5, 1890.

SILVER HALL-MARKING.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK, in rising to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the opinion of the Government of India has been asked with regard to the proposal that a system of "hall-marking" should be applied to silver articles manufactured in India, and if any despatch has been received from India on the subject, whether he has any objection to lay a copy of it upon the Table, said: My Lords, before putting the question to Her Majesty's Government of which I have given notice, I should like to congratulate the Government on having been able in this Session of Parliament to remedy the grievance that has been felt for many years in connection with this matter by persons engaged in the manufacture of silver articles in India. It is twelve years, I think, since a Committee of the House of Commons recommended that the duty on silver plate in India should be repealed. That recommendation was repeated by the Royal Commission over which my noble and learned Friend Lord Herschell presided, and nine years ago Mr. Gladstone, when he was Prime Minister, also expressed a desire that this duty should be repealed. But from untoward circumstances, it has remained until the present year, and I can assure the Government that the feeling of gratification in India will be very keen at finding that the duty has at last been repealed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in another place, has explained that it is not the intention of the Government to abolish the system of compulsory hall-marking in this country, and he indicated that it was intended that a system of "hall-marking of silver articles" should be established in India in respect to articles exported from India to this country. The present state of the law in respect of the import of silver articles from India is, I believe, that under the Inland Revenue Act, 1884, articles of Indian plate can be imported into this country without being assayed here, and it seems to me that condition of things is perfectly satisfactory to the Indian manufacturers of silver. Although it may possibly be an advantage to establish in India a system of voluntary hall-marking, it might very seriously affect the silver trade in India if any system of compulsory hall-marking should be established in that country. It will be obvious to your Lordships that to require that an article of art manufacture made, perhaps, 1,000 miles from the place where the article would be assayed should be brought up to be assayed in a semi-manufactured state, and then sent back to the artificer to finish, would be a most cumbrous and restrictive measure with respect to the manufacture of silver in India. But, however that may be, the Chancellor of the Exchequer very properly explained in another place that the Government did not intend to take any action in this matter without communication with the Government of India, and that Her Majesty's Government are actually in communication with the Government of India on the subject. That statement was made three months ago, and what I have to ask Her Majesty's Government is, whether they have received up to the present time any answer to that communication, and if such an answer has been received, whether there is any objection to its being laid on the Table of your Lordships' House?

LORD KNUTSFORD: My Lords, the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India has requested me to reply to the noble Earl's question, and to point out that the intentions of the Government, as indicated in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, were communicated to the Government of India, but the Government of India do not appear to be content with the arguments and statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The correspondence on the subject is not yet complete, but there will be no objection as soon as it is complete to lay it on the Table of the House.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, August 5, 1890.

EAST INDIAN CIVIL SERVANTS.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if the House will have an opportunity of discussing the Report of the Committee on the grievances of East Indian Civil Servants before any action is taken upon it; if it was intended that the Committee should report not only on the existence or non-existence of real grievances, but also on the specific remedies to be applied; whether the Government or the Under Secretary personally are pledged to the approval of the Report by the circumstance of the Under Secretary moving it in Committee, or whether he merely acted ministerially to carry out the resolutions of the Committee; and whether, if it is desired to take any action, either in the direction of conceding the recommendations of the Committee, or submitting those recommendations for the consideration of the Government in India, anything more can be done than to lay those recommendations before the Council of India in Downing Street, and to leave it to the majority of that Council to decide on a matter affecting the finances of India, and especially payments from the Home Treasury, in accordance with the power vested in them by the Indian Councils Act?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The reply to paragraphs one and three of the question is—No, and to the second and fourth—Yes.

THE INDIAN BUDGET AND THE INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now fix the date for the Indian Budget Statement; and whether, in view of the fact that the Indian Councils Bill affects more than 200,000,000 of Her Majesty's subjects, and that repeated undertakings have been given for its ample discussion at an early period of the Session, he will arrange that the Second Reading be taken with as little delay as possible?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I join in the expression of regret which I understand this question is intended to convey, that it has not been possible to take the Indian Budget at an earlier period in the course of the present Session. But that is due, I am afraid, to the fact that the House has debated other questions at very considerable length. In regard to the Indian Councils Bill there can be no doubt that it is a very important measure, affecting a large number of Her Majesty's subject. I also acknowledge that I have given repeated undertakings to the hon. Member that, as far as was in my power, an opportunity should be afforded for the consideration of the measure. It has not been possible to redeem those pledges. I deeply regret the fact, and I am afraid that it will not be possible to afford an adequate opportunity for the discussion of the Bill this Session. The hon. Member will see that I am unable at present to appoint a day for the Indian Budget Statement. As soon as we have got through the other business it will be taken.

MR. BRADLAUGH: In consequence of the answer which the right hon. Gentleman has just given in reference to the Indian Councils Bill, and the decided implication that it will be impossible to proceed with it in the course of the present Session, may I ask that it may be taken early in the next Session? I know that there are many Members, who, during the last two months, have specially intimated their intentions of taking part in the Debates upon it. It is quite certain that whenever it is taken there must be a long Debate on the Second Reading, seeing the number of Amendments which stand upon the Paper, and the avowed intention of raising in Committee the question of the elective principle.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I think it will be better, under the circumstances, that I should say at once that the Government will not proceed with the Bill this Session.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL [LORDS].
(No. 197.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

Thursday, August 7, 1890.

SILVER CURRENCIES.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the declared value of the exports for the year 1889 of British and Irish manufactures, machinery, &c., to countries having a silver currency, and on that amount what would be the increase remitted home in sterling owing to the rise in exchange on the basis of the exchangeable value of the rupee having risen from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 7d.?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I am not quite clear, from the hon. Member's question, whether he desires to show the exports of British produce and manufacture to countries with a silver currency or with a silver standard, which is not quite the same thing; because gold standard countries, as well as silver standard countries, may have a good deal of silver currency, as in England, France, Germany, and the United States. Taking, however, the list of the principal silver-using countries given by the Gold and Silver Commission at page 30 of their final Report, namely, India, China, Japan, Ceylon, Straits Settlements, Mauritius, Mexico, and Central America, I find the exports of British and Irish produce and manufacture amounted to £48,088,857 in 1889. I am unable to give a reply to the second part of the hon. Member's question, as the points involved are mainly matters of opinion and argument.

INDIAN CIVIL SERVANTS.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the principle of the justice of the Civil Servants' claims having been admitted by the Report of the Select Committee on the grievances of the Indian Uncovenanted Service, the Government will now fix the payment of the Indian pensions at a constant uniform rate of 2s. to the rupee in the cases of old servants employed when that was the prevailing rate of exchange for Government transactions with them, as shown in evidence; whether, inasmuch as the Select Committee were precluded from making inquiries into the grievances of servants who claimed to have been inadequately pensioned, including those members of the Public Works Department, retired under resolution of the Government of India, No. 2,079, 31st July, 1879, before they had served the period to qualify for full retiring pensions, the Committee will be re-appointed to inquire into such claims, with a view to the pensions of those gentlemen being equitably settled according to the hopes held out to them when they joined the Service, and according to the agreements, tacit or recorded, entered into by Government; and whether the recommendation of the Select Committee, fixing 1s. 9d. per rupee as the minimum rate for pensions, will be given retrospective effect in the same way as rules, made since the first appointment of those Civil Servants, have been hitherto applied?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The answer to the first question of the hon. Member is in the negative. The Secretary of State cannot admit the accuracy of the statement on which the question is founded. The answer to the second question is that the question is one which hardly ought to have been put to me. It is not a question for the Secretary of State, who does not appoint Select Committees, but it depends upon the wisdom of the House of Commons, which does. The answer to the third question is in the negative.

TREATIES OF COMMERCE.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if the several colonies of the British Empire are entitled to enter into negotiations with Foreign Powers to conclude with them independent Treaties of Commerce, or if such matters are left exclusively to the care and conduct of the Imperial Government; and, in the latter case, bearing in mind the declarations to Sir Alexander Galt and the Dominion Government of the late Lord Carnarvon in 1878, and of Lord Kimberley in 1881, which were interpreted by General Laurie, M.P., in the Canadian House of Commons, on the 21st of April last, "to be a Charter to the Colonies, authorising them to have a voice in all Treaties made with Foreign Powers in which colonial interests are concerned," if steps will be taken to ascertain from the representative Governments in Canada, Australasia, and South Africa, and the Chambers of Commerce in India and other British Possessions, if in their views the Treaties now being reviewed by a Government Committee are susceptible of any extension or modification for the advancement of trade between the United Kingdom and the colonies, and between the colonies and Foreign Powers?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): It has been the practice for the Imperial Government alone to conclude Commercial Treaties of Commerce with Foreign Powers, but on special occasions the representatives of the colonies have been consulted or admitted to take part in the negotiations. In regard to the latter part of the question of the hon. Member, it is not proposed to ascertain the views of representative Governments, or of Chambers of Commerce in India and other British Possessions until the Government have received the Report of the Committee.

Friday, August 8, 1890.

SOLDIERS ON SERVICE IN INDIA.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can explain why soldiers on service in India, who engage to serve in that country for eight years, and whose service expires on any date after the 1st January, are detained till the following trooping season; that is to say, that they have to spend an additional hot season in India beyond what they engaged to do; and why, seeing that the last troopship leaves India for home about the 15th April, all men whose eight years' service has expired previous to that date should not be permitted to return home at that date?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): A soldier enlists for seven years with the colours, subject to an extension of one year if serving abroad when his seven years come to an end. Except in time of war no men are kept abroad after completing eight years' service, unless by their own consent. The rule for the present year as regards Indian service is that all men who complete seven years' service—that is, seven years in all—by December 31, shall be brought home during the trooping season which ends on April 17, 1891.

MR. CONYBEARE: I think that the question, which has been altered since I handed it in, scarcely conveys the information I was desirous of obtaining. What I want to call attention to is the hardship imposed upon the men whose term of seven years' service expires shortly after the 31st of December, in being compelled to remain in India during the whole of the hot season. Cannot the right hon. Gentleman arrange that those men whose term expires between the 31st of December and the 25th of March shall be brought home at once, without being compelled to remain in India during the hot season?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: As the hon. Gentleman does not convey that point in the question upon the Paper, it would perhaps be better that he should put it down again.

MR. CONYBEARE: I am obliged for the reply which the right hon. Gentleman has given to me, but I must point out to you, Sir, that the Question has been materially altered at the Table. The alteration was not brought to my notice, but owing to the alteration, it is quite clear that a wrong impression has been conveyed to the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Question has been altered, but in the particular form in which it appears upon the Paper, it was thought that the substance of the Question had been preserved.

MR. CONYBEARE: I should be glad to communicate with the right hon. Gentleman on the matter, so as to make it quite clear what it is that I want to know.

COMPENSATION MONEY IN THE INDIAN ARMY.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the practice in the Indian Army for compensation money to be paid to the soldiers in lieu of an issue of cloth clothing, when it is found that owing to the wearing of white and "khakee" their cloth clothing does not need replacing; whether in some regiments such compensation money amounts to many thousands of rupees, which for the most part goes to the benefit of the canteen; and whether he will consider whether it would conduce to the moral and material interests of the men if such compensation money, less what is required by them for the providing of their Indian clothing, were paid to their credit in the savings banks and, like deferred pay, given to them on their discharge?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to answer the question which he has addressed to my right hon. Friend. The answer to the first paragraph of the question is in the affirmative. The answer to the second paragraph is that the amount varies in different regiments; the amounts due may be expended at the discretion of the commanding officer for the purchase of such articles of clothing or necessaries as the soldier may require. In reply to the third paragraph of the question, I have to say that the Secretary of State does not consider that any change in the existing regulation is necessary.

OVERCROWDING OF INVALIDS IN THE *MALABAR*.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can report to the House the result of the promised inquiry into the alleged overcrowding of invalids in the troopship *Malabar*?

SIR J. GORST: The Secretary of State has not yet received from the Government of India the result of the inquiry into the alleged overcrowding of invalids in the *Malabar.*

INDIAN UNCOVENANTED CIVIL SERVANTS.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I beg to put a question to my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether any steps have been taken by the Secretary of State to give practical effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee in regard to the grievances of the Indian Uncovenanted Civil Servants?

SIR J. GORST: In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to say that the Secretary of State in Council has adopted the recommendation that the pensions of all the Uncovenanted Indian Civil Servants, payable in the United Kingdom, shall be paid at a minimum rate of 1s. 9d. per rupee. The Minute will have a prospective effect, and will apply to all pensions which fall due in the present financial year. With regard to the other recommendations of the Select Committee, the Government of India must be consulted before effect can be given to them.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Are we to understand that this Resolution has been passed not only by the Secretary of State in Council, but by a majority of the Council of India?

SIR J. GORST: The Resolution has been passed in accordance with the law which regulates the Government of India.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Has it been passed in compliance with the law which requires that all provisions for the disposal of the Revenue of India shall be passed by a majority of the Council of India?

EAST INDIA (REVENUE ACCOUNTS).

Ordered, That the several Accounts and Papers which have been presented to the House in this Session of Parliament, relating to the Revenues of India, be referred to the consideration of a Committee of the whole House.

Resolved, That this House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into the said Committee.

Monday, August 11, 1890.

INDIAN PAPERS.

SIR W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): When are we to have a Memorandum from the Under Secretary for India with reference to the Indian Accounts?

MR. W. H. SMITH: It has gone to the printer's.

MR. BRADLAUGH: There is a Statement which is required by Statute to be laid on the Table before the 14th of May, and it has not yet been presented. I refer to the Report on the moral and material progress of India?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I will consult with my right hon. Friend as to the Paper.

Tuesday, August 12, 1890.

RATE OF EXCHANGE.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether there is an absolute rule fixing for a year the rate of exchange at which furlough pay and absentee allowances are issued in this country; and, if not, whether the Secretary of State will consider the propriety of fixing for the remainder of the current financial year a more equitable rate than that now ruling, the effect of which appears to be that officers on leave are losers to the amount of 9 per cent. as compared with the rate of exchange in India?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): Yes; there is a rate of exchange fixed at the beginning of each financial year, which is not altered whether exchange rises or falls. Officers can draw their furlough pay in India if they consider it advantageous to do so.

CONTRIBUTION OF MYSORE TO THE INDIAN ARMY.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, at the time of the creation of the present Mysore State in 1799, the Maharajah was bound by Treaty not only to pay for a British subsidiary force, but also in time of war to contribute to the expense of the British Forces; whether in 1807, by another Treaty, the latter obligation was commuted to the constant maintenance of 4,000 efficient Horse, at all times ready to accompany and serve with the British Armies; whether those obligations remain in force to this day; why, by way of indulgence, the number has now been reduced so low as 1,200; and whether the present arrangement is subject to the distinct understanding that the obligation for the support of the entire number required by the Treaty, should it at any time be deemed expedient to enforce that obligation, was not in any released, as stated in the Preface to the *Mysore Treaties*, published by the Government of India, Vol. V., page 250?

SIR J. GORST: In Parliamentary Paper, Mysore, No. 1 of 1881, the hon. Member will find the answer to the first and second questions. The answer to the third is, Yes. At page 129 of the Parliamentary Paper above mentioned, the hon. Member will find that as long ago as 1880 the number was reduced to 1,000.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: May I ask whether the number is permanently reduced to 1,000, or can it be increased?

SIR J. GORST: The hon. Member will find all the information on the page of the Blue Book I have mentioned.

Thursday, August 14, 1890.

INDIAN FACTORY LEGISLATION.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if the Secretary of State in Council approved the submission by the Government of India to the Indian Legislature of the Factory Law Amendment Bill now before that Legislature; and whether the Secretary of State has now required the Government of India to report their views regarding the resolutions of the Berlin Conference, in order that the question how far those resolutions should be applied to India may be decided by the Secretary of State rather than by the Government of India?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The reply to the first paragraph is, Yes. To the second, No. I will take this opportunity of repeating a statement which I was instructed by the Secretary of State to make in reply to the hon. Member for South East Lancashire (Mr. Hoyle), which, I understand, has been imperfectly reported, namely, that the principles affirmed at the Berlin Conference are being, and will be, observed in India.

THE MAHARAJAH OF MYSORE.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been drawn to a statement in the *Times*, of 8th August, that His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore has taken steps to put the Army of the Mysore State in a position to render extremely valuable aid in the defence of the Indian Empire; and whether any recognition of the loyal and patriotic action of His Highness and the Mysore Durbar has yet been accorded?

*SIR J. GORST: Yes; the Secretary of State has no doubt that the aid which it is reported the Maharajah of Mysore will give towards the defence of India will be suitably recognised by the Government of India.

THE BENGAL AND ASSAM RAILWAY.

SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is true, as stated in a recent telegram, that the Government of India proposes to take the construction and working of the proposed Bengal and Assam Railway out of the hands of private enterprise, and to work it as a State monopoly; and whether any Returns are available that show the relative cost of Government and private control respectively in such undertakings in India?

SIR J. GORST: The construction of the proposed Bengal and Assam Railway is a matter still under the consideration of the Secretary of State and Government of India. No Returns are available, but information on the subject may be found in the annual Reports of the Director General of Railways laid before Parliament.

BRITISH INDIAN SUBJECTS IN THE ORANGE FREE STATES.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to an Order issued by the Orange Free States, directing British Indian subjects to quit the towns within their jurisdiction; and, if so, whether the Secretary of State for India will use his influence with the Secretary of State for the Colonies to make a remonstrance in the terms of the Treaties of Pretoria in 1881 and of London, 1884, to secure for British subjects freedom of travel and trade?

*SIR J. GORST: The question as to the British Indian subjects in the Free States has been the cause of great anxiety to my noble Friend the Secretary of State for India, and he has used, and will continue to use, every means in his power to maintain those Treaty rights to which they are entitled.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

(5.58.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: There are on the Paper about 50 Votes for Report, then the Indian Budget, and after that some important Bills. Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to go on with the Indian Budget, the 50 Votes for Report, and the very important Bills to a late hour in the morning?

*SIR R. FOWLER (London): Will the right hon. Gentleman not allow the Indian Budget Debate to be adjourned, as was done in 1873?

MR. GOSCHEN: It is hoped that the House will go through the Report with some rapidity, if hon. Members will only exercise some of the discretion they showed yesterday. I am sure it is the general wish of the House that we should make progress. I am disposed to adhere rigidly to the order of business.

EAST INDIA (REVENUE ACCOUNTS).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

*(8.45.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I think I may congratulate the Committee of the House of Commons on being at last in a position to spare a few hours for the consideration of Indian Finance. I have noticed that there is a Motion in the name of the hon. Member for Northampton, regretting the late period of the Session at which the accounts relating to the Revenues of India have been presented. But I will not waste the precious time which we now have at our disposal in the expression of hypocritical regrets at the delay that has occurred. I am quite aware that the neglect of India by the House of Commons has its advantages as well as its disadvantages, but, whether it is good or no, it is one of the conditions under which India has to suffer. Those who are responsible for the affairs of India must make up their minds not only to indifference on the part of the House of Commons, but also to the absolute inability on the part of this House to pass the most ordinary and necessary Departmental measures; a state of things that is varied now and then by a sort of fierce Parliamentary search-light which is thrown upon every detail of Indian administration, however insignificant. These being the conditions under which we are placed, now that I have the opportunity of addressing the Committee of this House on the subject of Indian Finance, I have nothing but a dull and prosaic tale of prosperity to unfold. The formal resolution which it is my duty to move in Committee to-night has reference only to the completed accounts of the year 1888-9. Those accounts began in March, 1888, with a deficiency of Rx698,000, and are now closed with a surplus of Rx37,000. That is not a bad result. The causes of that improvement were fully explained by me 12 months ago, and I will not waste the time of the Committee by repeating what I then said. The interest of the Committee to-night will, no doubt, be rather concentrated upon the year 1889-90, of which we have the revised estimate before us, although the accounts have not yet been closed, and on the Budget estimate of 1890-1, of which only four months have as yet gone by. Now, the revised estimate of 1889-90 tells the same tale of continued improving financial prosperity which signalised the year 1888-9. The surplus which was estimated in the Budget of March, 1889-90, was Rx106,000, but in August last year, when I addressed the House of Commons on this subject, I was able to announce that this esti-

mated surplus had actually increased to Rx693,000. In the statement made by Sir David Barbour, in March last, in India, that surplus had grown to Rx.1,810,000, and the surplus which I am able to declare to the Committee tonight will be seen from the figures on page 7 of the estimate I have circulated, to be no less than Rx2,677,000. Great as this surplus is, it gives a very inadequate idea of the real improvement which has taken place in the Indian Revenue, because, in March last, the Government of India, seeing how great the surplus was likely to be, took active steps to diminish that surplus by a voluntary arrangement, by which they postponed from the year 1889-90 to the year 1890-91 a very large item of receipts, namely, the sum of Rx490,000 which was to be paid by the Provincial Governments as a special contribution to the Imperial Exchequer, and they also appropriated the sum of Rx433,500 to what the Government call the Famine Grant, annihilating in this way Rx923,000 of their surplus. Therefore, if the revised Estimate had been framed on the same basis as the original Budget, the surplus which Sir David Barbour had to declare in March last, would have been Rx2,733,000, while the surplus we should have to announce tonight would have been Rx3,600,500; this is a very satisfactory result. Well, Sir, the Committee would probably like to hear from me in the first instance some observations on the cause of this extraordinary financial improvement, and I may state that it is not in any degree due, as might perhaps have been supposed, to the alteration in the rate of exchange. The rise in exchange began at the end of July, and during the greater part of the year the rupee was actually lower in value than was calculated in the Estimate. The original Estimate was 1s. 4·38d. per rupee, and the actual result realised was only 1s. 4·55d.—a very slight rise. The real cause of the enormous improvement that has taken place has been partly increased revenue and partly diminished expenditure, the gain on the value of the rupee only amounting to Rx200,000, which, in a surplus of Rx3,600,500, is a very small fraction. Of the increased revenue, some part may not be considered as being a real advantage to the finances of India. This, I think, is very well illustrated by the fact that the greatest part of the increase in the net revenue is attributable to the item of opium. The improvement in the opium revenue of last year was no less than Rx1,076,000, but of that sum only Rx300,000 was derived from the improved price at which opium was sold in Calcutta. I suppose that, even from a moral point of view, we must rejoice in the high price of opium, and, from a financial point of view, Rx300,000 must be regarded as satisfactory. But I have to state that no less a sum than upwards of Rx700,000 in the improvement of the opium net revenue arose from the fact that the Government of India spent that much less in the purchase of opium. The Committee are aware that the Government purchase all the opium grown in Bengal at a fixed price, and sell it to the highest bidders. Last year there was a great failure in the opium crop of Bengal, and, therefore, the Government could not purchase the usual quantity; consequently, they spent Rx700,000 less than they had anticipated; and, although this has swollen the surplus of the present year, I am not certain that, in the long run, it will add to the prosperity of Indian finance. I will endeavour to give the Committee some idea of what an unstable item in Indian finance the opium revenue is. Last year the estimate made was Rs.1,070 per chest, and the highest price realised was Rs.1,215 per chest; every difference of Rs.100 per chest in the sale of this Bengal opium makes a difference to the Revenue of Rx570,000. The Committee will, therefore, understand how the hopes of Indian Finance Ministers go up and down with a small rise or fall in the value of opium per chest. Opium is the item in the net Revenue in which the greatest improvement has been shown, but if hon. Members will do me the honour to look at the Statement I have circulated they will see that every head of the Revenue has shown an increase, and the increase, in addition to the opium, has amounted to Rx1,637,400. Beyond this there is an increase in the Railway Receipts of Rx166,800, making a total improvement in the receipts of the Government of India of no less than Rx2,880,300, which, apart from the opium, is satisfactory. Nothing ought to encourage the hopes of Indian financiers more than the fact, which can be verified by reference to the accounts, that the Land Revenue of India shows a steady increase—an increase not caused by any over-renting of the lands. The Government of India is most careful never to perform that operation which is known elsewhere as rack-renting. The land is fairly rated to the Revenue, and the rating is seldom more than one-half the net value of the rent of the land. The Army charges have been reduced by Rx341,200. The defensive works by Rx410,900; interest by Rx229,800; and other expenditure by Rx367,900, making a total reduction of expenditure amounting to Rx1,349,800. I warned the Committee that the increase of receipts is not always a financial advantage. A great deal of this expenditure is not saved; it is only postponed. The whole of the sum will have to be spent, but not spent in the current year, but left over to swell this year's expenditure. So it is with the Army. A great deal of the saving in the Army charges is due to the fact that stores, guns, and other material supplied by this country, have not been purchased; therefore, the charge is saved in the year ending the 31st of March last, but only to re-appear as additional charge in this year. The total improvement has been Rx4,230,100, but of that part belongs not to the Imperial but to the Provincial Governments, because, as I explained at some length to the Committee last year, the receipts and expenditure of the Imperial and Provincial Governments are put together in these financial statements, and, in order to estimate what the real financial position of the Imperial Government of India is, it is necessary to detach the Provincial part, both of receipts and expenditure. Detaching the Provincial improvement, which amounts to Rx.735,900, the improvement in the Imperial finances is left at Rx3,494,200. When that is added to the original Budget surplus of Rx106,300 it makes the true surplus Rx3,600,500. Then, Sir, as I explained a short time ago, Rx923,500 has been given up by the postponement of the Provincial contributions to the following year, and by the allotment of a large sum to the reduction of the debt under the head of the famine grant, leaving the final surplus of 1889-90 Rx2,677,000. There we take leave of the year 1889-90, and now I come to the year which is now current, 1890-91. When Sir David Barbour brought in his statement, in March of the present year, he estimated the surplus of the year at Rx270,400. It has now grown, as is stated at page 8 of the Financial Memorandum which I have circulated, to Rx1,870,400, and that growth of the surplus of the present year is entirely due to the alteration in the rate of exchange. In the Budget estimate of Sir David Barbour the exchange was taken at 1s. 4·55d., or about 1s. 4½d., and so far as the year has now proceeded — four months — the rate realised has been very nearly 1s. 6d. In the Statement which I have circulated, I am taking the exchange value of the rupee for the year at 1s. 6½d., and 1s. 6½d. throughout the year would give a surplus of Rx1,870,400. Now, the Committee must not be too certain that that estimate of 1s. 6½d. will be realised. In order to realise it, the Council bills during the remainder of the year will have to stand at an average of not less than 1s. 7d. It is, no doubt, true that the rate of exchange to-day is considerably over 1s. 7d., in fact it has touched 1s. 8d., and is now about 1s. 7¾d., but with so doubtful, so uncertain a thing to deal with as the exchange value of the rupee, he would be a very hardy and bold financier who would venture to make quite sure that the advance in the rupee which has been maintained for the last two months past will continue to be maintained during the rest of the year. I said the improvement was entirely due to this rise in the exchange. Not only is it entirely due to the rise in the exchange, but if it had not been for this rise I should have had to tell the Committee to-night that the financial position of affairs was worse by no less than Rx560,000 than in March last. The advantage that accrues to the revenues of India from the alteration of the estimated value of the rupee from 1s. 4½d. to 1s. 6½d. is no less a sum than Rx2,160,000. This gain to the Revenue has not only increased the surplus to the sum I have mentioned, but it has wiped out a deficiency of Rx560,000, which would otherwise have had to be announced to the Committee to-night. This Rx560,000 is made up thus: In the first place, there is a loss of Rx40,000 on opium. The price has gone down below the low price estimated in March last; it has gone down so low as Rs1,040 per chest. The price of the Bengal opium has gone down, and the duty on the Malwa opium has been reduced; so, altogether, there has been a reduction in the estimated Revenue of Rx40,000. The railway receipts are worse by Rx320,000. Now that reduction in the estimated receipts from railways is, I believe, thought by many people to be due to the same cause that has induced a rise in the value of silver. Even bi-metallists think a rise in the value of silver will destroy a great deal of the Indian export trade; I do not myself share the gloomy, or, perhaps, joyous anticipations of the bi-metallists, but whether the trade will afterwards re-adjust itself or not, I do not think there is any doubt that the effect of the sudden rise in the value of the rupee is to check for the moment the export trade, and the reduction of the railway receipts is due to that check in the export trade of India. Some people say that check is permanent, others believe that the trade will adjust itself to any change that may arise, but, whichever theory is correct, there certainly is a temporary reduction. There is a further charge of Rx200,000 under interest. That is not in reality bad, because it arises from an offer the Government of India have made to convert the 4½ per cent. rupee loan which matures in 1893 into a 4 per cent. debt. It is expected that about half the holders will convert, and if that is the case the Government will have to pay in advance ½ per cent. on the amount of their holdings for three years, which is represented by this extra charge of Rx200,000 for interest. That is a charge on the Revenue of the present year, as it is paying at once money that would otherwise be distributed over the next three years. The Committee will now see that, although there is at the present moment a prospect of a large surplus of Rx1,870,000, it is not a surplus that can be calculated on with anything like certainty. I thought it my duty to inquire what would be the effect of a rise or fall of a penny in the rupee above the rate taken in the Estimate. Of course the Committee will see that the amount of the rise or fall on the penny depends on the value of the rupee, but at the rate of 1s. 6½d. per rupee the rise of a penny over the whole year, to 1s. 7½d., would be a gain to the Revenue of Rx930,000, nearly a million per annum, and the result of a fall of a penny, if the rate realised were 1s. 5½d. instead of 1s. 6½d., would cause a loss to the Revenue of Rx1,050,000. With the value of the rupee fluctuating with the exchange it would be rash, to say the least of it, to declare with certainty that the surplus I am announcing to-night will actually in the end be realised. Now, Mr. Courtney, the Government being in possession of this surplus would have before it two possible courses. One would be the remission of taxation, and the other would be the restoration of that mode of disposing of the surplus, which goes by the name of the Famine Grant, or Famine Insurance Fund. Now, I should like to be allowed to say a word or two to the Committee about this Famine Fund, because there is nothing in the world so simple as the transaction in itself, but by the abuse of names, it has been made as mysterious and as unintelligible to the ordinary intellect as the terminable annuity at home. Now, first of all, this insurance is not a material insurance, but a financial insurance, and it is based on a rough calculation that the consequences of famine in India are to impose on the people of India a burden of Rx15,000,000 in every 10 years. That burden represents partly the debt incurred by reason of the necessity of spending enormous sums of money when a famine does occur, and partly the loss of Revenue which is caused in a famine year and for several years succeeding the famine. On the best estimate which the Indian financiers can make the burden is represented by Rx15,000,000 once in every 10 years. Now, instead of burdening the taxpayers of India with the sum of Rx15,000,000 every 10 years, it is thought more prudent and better to burden them with Rx1,500,000 every year; and, therefore, the Government of India many years ago resolved that it would create a special surplus of Rx1,500,000 a year; that is to say, it would take out of the pockets of the taxpayers Rx1,500,000 supplied for the service of the year, instead of imposing on them the burden of Rx15,000,000 once in every 10 years. The working of that plan will be seen in a moment. If the Rx1,500,000 were applied exclusively to the payment of debt, you would then reduce your Indian debt by Rx1,500,000 a year till you came to the end of the 10 years, and then you would have a burden of Rx15,000,000 all at once thrown on it; but, as the Government of India is a continual borrower for the purpose of making railways and irrigation works, the whole or part of that Rx1,500,000 special surplus has been applied to purposes for which money would otherwise have been borrowed, applied not in the reduction of debt, but in the avoidance of debt which would be incurred for productive works, and that has the effect of keeping down the debt exactly in the same way as if actually applied to the re-payment of debt. But this special surplus has never been hoarded; it has never been invested, it has never been kept as a sort of purse which could be drawn on in the event of a famine. It has always been spent year after year. Ever since I have been Under Secretary of State for India, the Government have never been able to calculate on this special surplus of Rx1,500,000 without putting on additional taxation, and they have never thought it right to put additional taxation upon the people for the purpose of raising this Rx1,500,000, to be applied to the reduction of the debt. But it would be a great mistake if the Committee were to suppose that during the last two years no sums have ever been applied out of Revenue to the extinction of debt, and to the construction of railways and irrigation works. I had a statement prepared by the Financial Secretary to the India Office, which is a continuation of the Return moved for by the hon. Member for Northampton, which was presented to the House of Commons at Midsummer last year, and I see from this Return that since the year 1886-87, when the so-called Famine Grant is supposed to have been first seized, the sums which have been paid out of the Revenues of India for famine relief, for the construction of protective railways and protective irrigation works, and for the reduction of debt—purposes to which the Famine Grant has always been applied—have been as follows:—In 1886-87 Rx461,000; in 1887-88 Rx376,000; in 1888-89 Rx508,000; in 1889-90 Rx1,066,000; and in 1890-91 Rx1,033,000: making in the five years a total spent, for the purposes to which the Famine Grant is applicable, of Rx3,444,000. The surplus of these five years applied in the avoidance of debt was Rx2,628,000, so that altogether there has been spent in the five years for the reduction of debt, and for the prevention of debt, no less a sum than Rx6,072,000, or an average of Rx1,214,000. I think that for five years, with the nominal Famine Grant suspended—according to the hon. Member for Northampton the Secretary of State for India had laid hold of the Famine Grant—that is not such a bad result. The Committee must remember also that in the two years about which I am talking—the years 1889-90 and 1890-91—besides these two sums of Rx1,066,000 and Rx1,033,000, the whole of the surplus, Rx2,677,000 and Rx1,870,000, will be applied to the avoidance of debt, and, therefore, in these two years there will be applied to the reduction of debt not merely a surplus of Rx1,500,000, but a surplus of considerably more than Rx3,000,000. Now, do I suppose that after this statement which I have made the character of this transaction will be better understood and more readily admitted? No, I am not so foolish. I believe that men's minds are so tied and bound by the name "Famine Insurance Fund" or "Famine Insurance Grant" that they will still consider it to be a Fund. Mephistopheles remarked on the inveterate propensity of the human race when listening to mere words to believe that there was some real sense underlying them. I do not know that this House could have a more conspicuous example of that propensity to which Mephistopheles drew attention than the fact that the hon. Member for Northampton who is so sensible, and sees things so clearly, still talks about the Famine Insurance Fund having been seized upon by the Secretary of State and the Government of India as if they had robbed the people of it. I see that Sir David Barbour, in a speech which he made in India in March last, said he conceived the "only method of safeguarding our surplus is to call it a Famine Grant." So be it; but, if he saves the surplus by calling it the Famine Grant, he must not mind others saying it does not exist because it is called the Famine Grant. The Committee will observe that, in order to keep up the special surplus to the amount of one and a half millions, no less than Rx.957,200 more would have to be appropriated next year. You have nearly half a million to add to the appropriation for the present year, and you will lose besides a sum of nearly half a million from the provincial contributions, so that it will take nearly a million—Rx.957,200—of the present surplus to make up the Famine Grant to its normal condition, and leave only a surplus of Rx.913,200. It is quite clear, with the uncertainty of the surplus, that it would be impossible to apply it to the reduction of taxation. [An hon. MEMBER: The Salt Tax.] The Salt Tax—the increased Salt Tax—is an impost which the Secretary of State and the Government of India have pledged themselves to remove at the first opportunity. The cost of removing this extra half rupee on the Salt Tax is Rx.1,500,000—the exact amount of the Famine Insurance Grant. If the hon. Member for Northampton will give up the Famine Insurance Grant, and if the Government of India were willing to give up this surplus, then the extra Salt Tax might be at once removed, but they have thought, and I think rightly, that the first duty of the Government upon the return of this financial prosperity is to restore the special surplus, Famine Grant, or whatever you like to call it, and that the remission of the extra Salt Tax, important as it is, must wait until that is restored. I will inform the hon. Member who is anxious about the Salt Tax as to the result of the increased tax. The consumption, which had been slightly reduced in 1888-89, after the imposition of that extra half rupee, has now gone up again to more than the figure of 1886-87. Bengal is the only province in India in which there is a reduction, and that reduction is not attributable to the increased Salt Duty, because, if hon. Members will refer to page 21 of the East India Financial Statement, they will see a table of the prices of Liverpool salt in Bengal, which shows that it is the action of the Salt Syndicate and the freight rates which is accountable for a considerable part of the enhancement in the value of salt, and that an increase of price has taken place, exclusive of the duty, of about four or five annas per maund. While the extra tax is, no doubt, one which ought to be removed, and which shall be removed as soon as it is financially proper to do so, I think the figures to which I have referred hon. Members will encourage them and encourage the Government of India to look, in the first place, to the restoration of the Famine Insurance Grant.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Is that to be the first reduction?

***SIR J. GORST**: I cannot here, in the House of Commons, pledge the Government of India. I can only say the Government of India have determined that the first use to be made of the surplus realised and counted upon shall be to restore the Famine Insurance Grant to its normal dimensions, and I can only refer the Committee to the declaration which I have, by the authority of the Secretary of State, made in the House, to the effect that the enhancement of the Salt Duties is only to be regarded as a temporary measure rendered necessary by financial exigencies, and that a reduction to the old Salt Duty of two rupees per maund will take place as soon as it is financially possible. I will not detain the Committee by any comment on the statement which I have made. I think the Committee will agree with me that the state of the finances of India, as disclosed in the Papers which I have laid on the Table, is encouraging and satisfactory, and, though it would be extremely foolish to indulge in visions of enormous surpluses and great reductions of taxation, at all events we may contemplate the future of Indian finance with hope and cheerfulness. (9.37.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it appears, by the Accounts laid before this House, that the Total Revenue of India for the year ending the 31st day of March 1889 was Rx.81,696,678; that the Total Expenditure in India and in England charged to Revenue was Rx.81,659,660; that there was a Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure of Rx.37,018; and that the Capital Outlay on Railways and Irrigation Works was Rx.1,638,001, besides a Capital Charge of £10,336,049 involved in the Redemption of Liabilities."—(*Sir John Gorst.*)

*(9.53.) **MR. BRADLAUGH** (Northampton): I think the statement of the Under Secretary for India was characterised by even more than his usual ability, and by even more than I expected of that charming kind of competence which, in a lesser orator, might be described as audacity. I feel flattered by the right hon. Gentleman's reference to what he was pleased to say I described as the Famine Fund, although I am sure the right hon. Gentleman's memory helped him as to the source from which I got that title. That source is the speeches and Despatches of the various Governors, and especially of those of the Viceroy, who initiated what is called the Famine Fund. The right hon. Gentleman said he would refrain from wasting the time of the Committee in hypocritical regrets at the lateness of this Debate. If I thought strong language would have any effect either upon the right hon. Gentleman or the Government which he so ably represents, I would be inclined to use it on this occasion, for I think it is disgraceful in the extreme that the Indian Budget Statement, which in 1873 was considered important enough to occupy three days of the time of the House, should be brought on after the Report of 48 Votes in Supply has been agreed to. I presume, however, it is the intention of the Government to shorten from year to year the time at the disposal of the House for the investigation of the affairs of 270,000,000 of people directly or indirectly subject to British rule. I do not wonder that the right hon. Gentleman thought that any expression of regret on his part would be hypocritical, for he must have well remembered that the leader of the House more than once distinctly promised that the Indian Budget should be taken this Session at an earlier date than before. But his Statement has been made to the House after the Appropriation Bill has been brought in and passed through its first stage. There was a remarkable absence from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman this year of any such specific allusions to legislation as helped to ornament his speech last year, for where then he audaciously put upon the House the blame for want of legislation, he must have well remembered that the whole of the blame rests this year upon the Government, and has been in breach of an absolute pledge, frequently admitted by the First Lord of the Treasury and held out to me as an inducement not to raise a discussion on Indian affairs at that stage of business when it would have been inconvenient to the Government—the Address at the beginning of the Session. There has been no attempt to submit to the House those legislative proposals to which the right hon. Gentleman so vaguely alluded. Now, I shall have the support of the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple), who takes as much interest in these matters as any Member of the House, and in the estimation of those who honour him in Bombay, much more interest than some, who was himself prevented from carrying out the intention he had formulated by the pledge given to introduce into the House a measure based on elective principles which if carried would obviate the necessity of discussing financial proposals here at all, for they would be discussed in elective, Viceregal, or other Councils in India by men understanding what was submitted to them. To discuss the affairs of 270,000,000 of people with such support given from the leaders of our Party as that Bench shows—[*the Front Opposition Bench was empty*]—and that strong array of the Conservative Party opposite is enough to warrant my Motion on the Paper that the late date of presentation of Accounts and Papers relating to the revenues of India renders it impossible to satisfactorily examine and discuss the Indian Financial Statement. Last year the explanatory statement of the right hon. Gentleman, to which he did so much injustice in one of his moments of forgetfulness as to describe it as simply his speech, was circulated two and a half months before it came on for discussion. Then anyone who paid attention to it had time to examine the matter; but I appeal to the Committee whether it is possible to deal with these millions of tens of rupees hurled at our heads this evening with anything like intelligent criticism. Last year a Statement, which is issued annually, and is by Statute required to be issued at a particular time of the year, was issued before this annual explanation, and enabled the House to check the matters submitted by the

right hon. Gentleman and to correct errors into which he had fallen by following blindly the information submitted by permanent officials. This Statement, called a statement, exhibiting the moral and material progress and condition of India, is not even now in the hands of Members. And why not? I see by the Votes this morning—I think I must be mistaken—some record of a document having been laid on the Table last night, but I went into the Library and found nothing of it there except an endorsement and some blank sheets of paper. I ask, why is this Statement withheld? It should have been laid on the Table before. The Statute 21 & 22 Vict., cap. 106, sec. 53, says that the financial accounts are to be laid before Parliament during the first 14 days of May, and such accounts shall be accompanied by a statement prepared from detailed Reports from each Presidency and district in India in such form as shall best exhibit the moral and material progress and condition in each Presidency. Why has this Statute been disobeyed? The English Law Officers are not in their places. I do not know whether the Irish Attorney General can assist me, but clearly a misdemeanour has been committed by somebody. I do not say the Under Secretary is criminally responsible, but certainly somebody is, for having disobeyed an exact statutory command. Common decency requires that these matters, absolutely necessary to the understanding of the accounts of India, should be put into the hands of Members at least at such a time as will enable them to examine and master them. If I did not know the thoroughly frank and confiding nature of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary, I should imagine that he had withheld it for the purpose of preventing me from making the same use of it as I did last year; but I know that is impossible, and I know that his legal advisers at the India Office would not have permitted him to wilfully to break the Statute, even if his personal inclination tempted him to do so, which is a perfectly untenable position. I may ask the Committee, I think, to express disapproval; and if the offence is repeated next year, I shall have to ask the House to express disapproval of this absolute disregard of the law by the Indian Government entrusted with its enforcement and maintenance. It is true, as urged by the right hon. Gentleman, that this semblance of Parliamentary indifference to Indian affairs has arisen since the Imperial Government has been charged with the administration of Indian affairs. When the East India Company had its charter Parliament and the Government of the day were jealous in the extreme, and inquiry after inquiry was held—not a sham, but real inquiry—but to-day it is pretended—I will not say it of the right hon. Gentleman because he is not capable of any pretence that does not represent his real official feeling; but I have come to know that official knowledge and exact knowledge are not always the same; it is pretended now that Parliamentary inquiry would embarrass the Government and prevent the Viceroy and the Secretary of State doing what is wanted. But it was not so when the East India Company had its charter. Parliament then held inquiry, and the result was good to India and not harm. If the Government break their promises, at least they should abide by the law, as less important persons have to do. I do not know what excuse will be made for the delay in issuing the explanatory Memorandum, but the right hon. Gentleman must feel that it is simply absurd to present to the House on the very day upon which his statement is made a huge mass of figures from which he selects only a few to embellish as he does everything he touches with fine figures of speech and quotations from classical authors, such, for instance, as his reference to Mephistopheles. There is one thing which the Under Secretary has not dealt with in his Financial Statement. It is only a small matter, but I clear it away before I come to greater ones. We heard a reply to a question, and we gathered from what are called the usual sources of information that considerable pressure had been put on the Government from their own side of the House to render some pecuniary assistance to make some payment—I will not say to give some reward to Mr. Crawford. I asked the right hon. Gentleman to state the nature of the special payments mentioned on page 35 of the explanatory statement. I cannot suppose they have any reference to the matter.

*SIR J. GORST: No.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: That is what I expected; but I ask because we have an explanatory statement that does not explain what we want, and elucidates much that is already quite clear. But let me tell the right hon. Gentleman that a very strong feeling on this account exists in India against any attempt being made to divert any portion of the money raised by taxation of the Indian people to rewarding a man who, whatever you say of the case, has clearly been guilty of corrupting justice in the worst fashion, and in resentment of the action of the Government, in direct opposition to the wishes of Lord Reay, who, addressing the people on the eve of his departure, made use of words such as had never before been used by a man in his position. He said that in order to influence the Government to keep their promise he had even gone the length of tendering his resignation, or doing something equivalent to it. I will not enlarge on this, for I fear I may bring myself, Sir, under your displeasure. Now I come to a much less exciting topic, the announcement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer early in the Session that he would abolish the Silver Plate Duty, and I come to that in connection with the trade and manufactures of India. To be effective in India it must be accompanied by some such measure as the abolition of hall-marking. On July 15 I put a question on the subject.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know how this concerns the finances of India.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I will not attempt to trespass on your ruling, Sir; but may I suggest that the silver manufacturer in India is possibly connected with the Income Tax, and thus affecting income affects the finances of India? Judging from your gesture, I find you do not accept my construction. I will content myself with saying that if I had been in order, I would have read to the Under Secretary a letter from the Private Secretary of the Viceroy containing a statement of information which the right hon. Gentleman said he had not got on July 15, as having reached home in the month of May. But I pass on to railways, just asking, because the same query bears on other matters, is there any juggle in the use of the word "official"? Is it possible that information sent home does not always reach the right hon. Gentleman? Is it possible that information sent home does not always reach the right hon. Gentleman? Is it possible that either on railways, on hall-marking, or on anything else, letters could come from the Viceroy of India, that the substance of those letters could be communicated by the Viceroy to other people than the Members of the Government of India, and that yet the Under Secretary of State for India could stand up in that House and officially deny any knowledge of them?

*SIR J. GORST: I have no knowledge of the private correspondence of the Viceroy.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I did not suppose the right hon. Gentleman would have knowledge of private correspondence of the kind. The question, however, is whether, when letters were written by the Viceroy to the Secretary of State in Council, the contents of which were communicated, by the direction of the Viceroy himself through his private secretary, to third parties, the contents of such documents were so little within the knowledge of the Under Secretary of State for India that he felt entitled to say that the Secretary of State knew nothing about them. If that is so, I submit that we discuss Indian affairs under considerable difficulty. When the right hon. Gentleman replies, I will ask him for some explanation of the policy of the Government in relation to railways. He has been reticent on this question, though I have addressed searching questions to him. I will ask him whether the Secretary of State received from the Viceroy of India a Despatch dated November last which referred to the outlines of the terms on which the Secretary of State proposed that Railway Companies should, under the new policy, in future be established? (1.) A company is to be formed having an English domicile, whose share capital in sterling will amount to that proportion of the whole capital required that would, in the ordinary course, be expended on the purchase of stores and plant and on other charges in England. This proportion may, it is said, be taken approximately at one-third of the total cost of the railway. (2.) The remainder of the capital required would be supplied by the Government of India. (3.) Interest in sterling at such rate as may be agreed upon (we hardly suppose that a rate much less than 4 per cent. will be accepted) on the company's share capital would be a first charge of the net earnings. (4.) The remainder of the net earnings would be made over to Government to defray the charges of interest on the Government share of the capital until the interest charges at 4 per cent. (or at whatever rate of interest the capital is raised) on that capital are fully met. (5.) The surplus profits, after the payments indicated in (3) and (4) have been made, would be divided between the Government and the company in certain proportions. Were these proposals submitted to the Viceroy a year ago, and did the Government of India reply that the practical effect of this policy on the future expenditure on railways, interpreted in figures, would be something of this kind? Supposing that we raise in India a sum of, say, 2¼ crores of rupees for railway construction, a sum equal to half that amount—or a little over one crore, equal to about two-thirds of a million sterling—would be added to meet English expenditure and would be raised in England, partly through the shares of the new company, partly (as far as State railways are concerned) by loans raised by the Secretary of State. Did the Government of India say that it could not admit that in return for this diversion of State funds into the hands of others we shall obtain any of the real advantages which follow on the encouragement of private enterprises? The assistance intended to be given to a company thus constructed is nothing less than a sterling guarantee of interests on the company's share capital in a new form, and it is a guarantee which is practically charged on the Revenues of India. It is hardly likely that the Government of India would propose, or that any company would accept, the construction of a line with such poor prospects of traffic that the net earnings would not produce more than 1 per cent. on the capital invested. It is, however, evident that if the company's shares are not to exceed 33 per cent. of the whole capital that net earnings amounting only to 1 1-3 per cent. on the whole capital would be sufficient to provide 4 per cent. on the share capital of the company, which would be virtually guaranteed interest at that risk. And did the Government of India go on to say—

> "We should thus have repeated one of the chief evils of the old guaranteed system. From the time the undertaking paid 1 1-3 per cent. until it paid over 4 per cent.—and this in the case of our secondary lines would probably be the situation during the whole of the first period of the contract—there would not be the slightest inducement for the company to economise. They would be secure in the receipts of interest at 4 per cent. guaranteed on the net earnings, while there would be no hope of their receiving more until surplus profits were declared. From first to last the position of the shareholders would be the same as that of the shareholders of the Madras Railway Company."

And did the Indian Government add—

> "We are far from wishing to discourage true private enterprises when it can be properly so called. By private enterprise we mean such companies as the Bengal and North Berber Railway Company or the Delhi Halka Company, which was created for the construction, not for the working, of the line. To these the only assistance given by Government was the free grant of land, and in their financial success the Government of India is as little directly concerned as in that of a tea or jute manufacturing company. To all companies raised on these terms, subject to the broad lines of policy we have before referred to, we consider that every possible encouragement should be given. While, however, these are our feelings with regard to the encouragement of genuine private enterprise, we do not extend to them proposals for the creation of companies which would have a very limited interest in the concern from which they take their name, which would contribute only a small portion of the capital at an unnecessarily high rate of interest, yet on what is really absolute security, and which for the rest of their capital would have to draw from the Government Treasury funds in the management of which the State could thereafter have but little influence, and from which it probably would get a very poor return. Moreover, the creation of a new class of companies fostered by a new kind of guarantee will necessarily be inimical to the extension of real private enterprise, as no promoter will be willing to accept greater risk than is involved in the new terms?"

I ask for categorical answers on these points. When I asked last year my questions were avoided; when I repeated specific questions this year I got no answer; and I can only tell the right hon. Gentleman that if the Government of India is conducted without laying upon the Table of this House the Papers which would really instruct the House as to what is happening, they cannot wonder that the air is full of rumours of jobbery, and that it is suggested that particular favourites get particular advantages; and no such rose-coloured speeches as we have heard to-night will be sufficient to hinder inquiry upon these points. This is a matter which we know has been discussed in the Viceregal Council of India; and in the East India Financial Statement laid upon the Table of this House in compliance with the Statute, we do get some references—not very many—which enable us to learn something about the matter. We find that the kind of questions which I have pressed upon the right hon. Gentleman to-night were, though not quite in the same distinct fashion I admit, pressed, as would be seen by page 89 of the Statement. The Hon. Sir A. Wilson, a member of the Council, expressed his regret that no definite policy was put forward by the Government with regard to the future construction of railways. The Hon. Charles Elliott in reply said, as will be found on pages 96 and 97, that—

> "To answer the question put by Sir A. Wilson as to what the railway policy of this Government is would require a full exhaustive statement,"

which he was not prepared to give. But now I ask the attention of the Committee to the curious coincidence between the language used by Sir Charles Elliott and the passages about which I have challenged the right hon. Gentleman to say "Yes" or "No" to my allegation that they are part of a Government Despatch, either official or unofficial, or a Letter from the Viceroy of India to the Secretary of State in Council. I am unable to distinguish between documents which are official or unofficial when they end in burdening the country with heavy expenditure. Sir Charles Elliott says—

> "It cannot be denied that it is not economical to raise money at 3½ per cent. through the agency of companies when it can be raised by the State at 3 per cent., as is the case now."

And I say this shows that it had been proposed to raise money through the agency of companies, if not in the express words (and I feel tolerably sure it was in the express words that I have given), at any rate to the effect that I have alleged to this Committee. Sir Charles Elliott goes on to say—

> "Therefore it is not the policy of the Government to encourage the creation of any more companies on terms corresponding to those I have just mentioned:"

and I ask the Under Secretary for India to say whether the policy of the Secretary of State in Council is identical with the policy of the Viceroy in Council; or whether the policy of the Viceroy in Council is one thing and the policy of the Secretary of State in Council another. I ask the Secretary of State to say what railway proposals have been considered by him in Council in England which the Government of India at Simla have rejected, or with which they have disagreed; and I will ask him, also, what is the need of the Secretary of State in Council to meddle in the job of raising money in connection with railways by companies who are to be protected by the Government of India, but of which the taxpayer is to bear the burden and the loss. But I would also ask the right hon. Gentleman, before I pass to the other portion of the railway question, whether there is any part proposal, or any part proposals which the Secretary of State in Council has made to the Government of India which the Government of India have accepted, or whether there are any modifications transmitted by the Viceroy to the Secretary of State in Council which have been accepted here; and if he will state what they are. It is no use talking about secrecy in these matters. When they are sufficiently known to be the subject of discussion in all circles interested in them, and when I am able to challenge the Secretary of State in a matter of this kind, perfectly sure that if a Committee of this House were granted to me I could put my hands upon the document giving the precise reference to it, so that there can be no doubt about it, it is perfect nonsense to talk about the matter being secret, and about the Secretary of State being hindered carrying out his duty effectively. The only thing hindered is the effectuation of any job. Now, in connection with the railways there is one point about which I ask an answer. General Trevor is reported to have said recently that—

> "The idea in high Government circles in India is to discontinue metre gauge construction, with the intention, eventually, of again obtaining a uniform gauge throughout India by gradually changing the existing metre gauge

lines into broad. This reversal of policy will,"

he says—

> "Involve a tremendous waste of public money, probably about £20,000,000, as the change will cost about £3,500 a mile, and outside Burma there are over 6,000 miles of metre gauge road."

*SIR J. GORST: Will the hon Gentleman say from what he is quoting?

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I am quoting from a Report furnished to me of a speech made by General Trevor at a recent railway meeting. I will take, for the purpose of this Debate, the responsibility of using General Trevor's words as a question to the right hon. Gentleman, and I will ask him what is the policy of the Government.

*SIR J. GORST: Will the hon. Gentleman kindly tell me whether that railway meeting was in London or in this country?

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I fancy it was not. I fancy it has been twice reported, and from the source from which I take it, I think it was not in this country. I am not sure of that, but I am content to take it. The fact of whether it has been said at some railway meeting in this country or not is of no importance to the question I put, which is, whether the Government do intend this metre gauge change, and whether it is true that the expenditure will be an enormous expenditure bringing in no additional Revenue and giving no help to the unfortunate people of India who have to bear the cost? I now come to the Famine Fund. I listened to that portion of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman with considerable interest, as I had read with considerable interest the speech of Sir David Barbour, from which he has quoted; and there is this one advantage in the sudden interruption which occurred when I rose to address the Committee that I was able to refresh my memory by a reference to the eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman upon this subject last year. His view then upon the Famine Fund was not quite the view with which he has entertained, as he always does when he speaks to a Committee of this House, us this evening—the view that it is the paramount duty of the Government to restore this Famine Grant. I do not know whether there is any mysterious or miraculous advantage in the substitution of the word "grant" for "fund," or how that which is taken in taxation from the people of India becomes a grant to them if they do not get it; but that is a trifling matter. The right hon. Gentleman to-night is content to call it a Famine Insurance Grant, and it is so sacred a matter that there is to be no reduction in taxation, no remission of the Salt Tax until it is restored. But did this Famine Grant or Fund ever exist? Last year the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State assured us that it never existed. He said:—

> "There was an intention on the part of the Indian Government to create such a fund, but that intention has never been carried out."

Now, what a monstrous farce it is one year to tell the Committee that the Member who seeks to describe, in the words of the Viceroy and Financial Minister for India, a fund in relation to famine as a Famine Fund, is so wrong that there never was a fund, but that there was only an intention to create it, which was never carried out; and then, this year, when they have got money in their pockets, to say, "It is our solemn and paramount duty to keep every farthing we have got because we are going to devote it to the restoration of that fund, which had been misapplied and misplaced!" I ask the right hon. Gentleman—I know his acuteness is sufficient for anything—to reconcile the Under Secretary for India to-night with the Under Secretary for India who addressed the Committee last August. I cannot help being gratified. I feel sure that nothing I could say in any fashion influenced the conduct of the Viceroy in Council in India or the conduct of the Secretary of State in Council here. What has happened, though *post hoc* is not *propter hoc*; and what I said ought to have been done, and told the Committee last year had not been done, but ought still to be done, is now to be done, and I am quite sure that when the Viceroy in Council determined on doing it no report of a speech in *Hansard*, which may have got out to India, had been in any way helpful to them, and that it was only from their inner consciousness of what was right and just that they arrived at the conclusion which, however ineffectually, I had endeavoured to submit to this House. Now, in the statutory Financial Statement, Section 3, paragraph 17, it was admitted that there had been a slight departure from the original policy of the Government in relation to the famine surplus, and the course was decided upon which the Under Secretary of State has explained to the Committee this evening. It is a comfort to hear from him that the surplus which the Government has now at its disposal enables them even to be partially honest, and I do not want in any fashion to say any words other than those of real congratulation. I will not attempt to express any hypocritical regret that they have not been as honest as they should have been in the past; anything in the direction of honesty will be welcome. But I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman there are two points of remission in taxation, and not one, as he said, to which the Government of India might give some attention, and I would suggest that one is in relation to the Income Tax. I pray the pardon of the Committee for detaining it so long; but, unfortunately, this is the only one occasion in the year when one has any opportunity of speaking on the subject. There is a very strong feeling in India that it would give great relief. I am not prepared to say how it would affect the figures—it must, therefore, be subject to that criticism that the minimum of the Income Tax might be raised, so that incomes less than 1,000 rupees should not be affected by that tax. It is alleged that in incomes less than 1,000 rupees there is oppression in the collection. On that there are Reports within the knowledge of the Under Secretary of State, and I will not dwell upon the matter longer than to bring it under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman. But I must press him upon the question of the Salt Tax. I intended to have referred to the reduction of the consumption of salt in Bengal, which is 355,000 maunds less in the closed year than in the year before, and 722,000 maunds less than in 1886-7. I wish to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the fact that the falling off was attributable to two causes: One the increased Salt Duty, and the other the increased price created in India by the salt monopoly. I have called attention to that because it gives me an opportunity of denouncing the infamy that is perpetrated under cover of the law by registering companies for the purposes of a huge monopoly. As long as private capital is left in the contest, to the ordinary working of the laws which govern all matters of trade and agriculture may be left the fair levelling of cost of production without powerful combinations being allowed to associate together in a way which the law did not permit until the Joint Stock Companies' Act of 1865 was passed, and when Limited Liability Companies were formed for the first time. I say great care should be taken in registering such companies, and when they are registered they should be brought under the notice of the Law Officers of the Crown when it is found that they were registered for purposes avowedly illegal under the decisions of the High Courts in this Realm. By the decision in "The King *v.* Norris," reported in the second volume of Lord Kenyon's Reports——

THE CHAIRMAN: Surely the hon. Member will see that he is now travelling outside the scope of the subject before this Committee.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I respectfully submit not, Sir, because in page 21 of the East India Financial Statement, 1890-91, which was laid on the Table of this House by the Government, they deal with the increased duty, and the price of salt increased by the English syndicate, and I submit, with all respect now, Sir, I am entitled to criticise this statement, and the conduct of the Government in relation to it. On a point of order, I respectfully submit that to you, Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot see how it is relevant to the subject before the Committee.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I will read the words of the Financial Statement, so as to make my point clear, because I am afraid I have not made it sufficiently clear, Sir; I am reading from paragraph 22, page 21, of the Statement which was laid on the Table—

> "The only province in which consumption has not fully recovered is Bengal, and there the imposition of the increased duty has not been the only cause of the falling off, which is largely attributable to the increase in price resulting from the action of the English Salt Syndicate and the higher level of freights."

I respectfully submit to you now, Sir, I am entitled to see how the English Salt

Syndicate has managed to increase the price, and I am entitled, if it be illegal, to show to the Government how it is illegal, and to press upon the Government that it is their duty to put an end to the illegality.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is clearly outside the scope of this discussion.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: The moment you say that, Sir, it is, of course, my duty to accept, as I always do, with the most profound respect, the ruling you give, but it then becomes my duty to appeal to this Committee, when it is sitting as a House and not as a Committee, to give at least once a year, as by the old custom always was given, some opportunity during which a representative of the defenceless native may put before the Parliament of England his criticisms of the official statements of the Government, and to know if he cannot get some redress for the grievances which he pointed out. Now, Sir, passing from that, which I have not the right to allude to after the intimation from you, Sir, I come to the question of the Salt Duty. When Sir Evelyn Baring was Finance Minister in 1882, in his financial speech for the year he said that—

> "The tax-paying community in India was exceedingly poor, to derive any very large increase of revenue from so poor a population would be unjustifiable."

Since then the Salt Tax has been increased, and I appeal to the Government, with their present surplus, to make some effort at its reduction. In 1886 the Finance Minister, in his speech on the Income Tax, described the mass of the people as—

> "Men whose income, at the best, is barely sufficient to afford them the sustenance necessary to sustain life."

We all know the important part of consumption that salt plays in connection with vegetable foods by which the Indian does sustain life. The ominous words of the Under Secretary of State for India prepared the Committee for the statement that the reduction in the Army expenditure this year was a reduction to be equalled, or more than equalled, by increased expenditure, either in the year that is to come or at some near period; but what I say to the Government, have less arms and more full bellies. Let these unfortunate people, for whom the Under Secretary of State pleaded with an eloquence that would have moved anyone, have their wants supplied. He quoted them to show the desperate state of the Mussulman cultivator under a Hindu ruler. Let him quote, as I ask him to do, from the Reports of the Government officials—showing the conditions of Mussulman cultivators under English rule. Let the Secretary of State in Council consider this which he regarded as a sufficient justification for the depositions of an Indian Prince. The right hon. Gentleman delivered in his speech to the Committee an encomium on the fairness of the English Land Revenue. He cannot have read the Reports made by an English official, Mr. Thorburn, who occupied a high position in the Punjab for the last 25 years, and who tells us that the effect of our Land Revenue system in the Punjab upon the Mussulman—those Mussulmen for whom, in the case of Kashmir, the Under Secretary of State for India was moved—is so bad that it has such an oppressive bearing upon the people, and that nothing but a complete change in the manner of the collection of the English Land Revenue can prevent an outbreak, in which blood must be shed, and which will take terrible bloodshed to quell. Last year the right hon. Gentleman used language totally dissimilar to what he has used this year about the Salt Tax. He then said that Lord Cross regarded it as not a desirable tax, and that he assented to it with reluctance, but tonight he says we must wait until the duty of the Government has been performed, and until he has achieved the restoration of the Famine Fund of £1,500,000——

SIR J. GORST: I call it a special surplus.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Gentleman is not the Indian lexicon. It was the officer who initiated this fund who called it a Famine Fund, and it was the officer who sent this message to the House of Commons who calls it a Famine Insurance Grant. I do not say all the names given by officials are not wrong. At any rate, I can only take choice amongst the official words, and to leave the Committee to criticise them. I regret if I said anything that made the right hon. Gentleman uneasy. I must call it a Famine Fund, which, according to the right hon. Gentleman, last year was never subscribed, and which he now practically admits has been made away with, and which is now to be restored, and then the Salt Tax shall be removed. I have already trespassed a long time on the Committee, but there is one matter to which I would wish to allude in connection with the Army expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Army expenditure has been lessened. I wish he could say the same with regard to human life which has been lost. With regard to this military expenditure, which includes the Chin Lushai expedition, I desire to draw the attention of the Committee to the terrible loss of life as to which I have put several questions during the Session. I select only one British Regiment, the King's Own Scottish Borderers, from which 14 officers and 500 men formed part of the expedition; of these, one officer and 122 men died from sickness, six officers and 120 men were invalided from sickness, leaving a remainder of seven officers and 163 men only to return, and of these one officer and 10 men have since died. I appeal to the Government to put a stop to this sacrifice of human life. I had intended to quote from the Report of Mr. Maconochie, upon the state of the agricultural population in the Punjab, so piteous in its details, and so shocking in its facts, that, putting it side by side with the speech made by the right hon. Gentleman himself as to the agricultural population in Kashmir, one naturally wonders how the mote was so easily seen, and the beam entirely unrecognised. I have no right to, and I should submit myself to your displeasure, if I made any allusion to the incapacity of the Government here to carry the smallest measure of legislative reform in this Session. I probably have no right to reproach them for their neglect of duty. I can only submit it to the Committee in this dry and poor statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: I understand that the hon. Member proposes to submit to the Committee an alternative to the Resolution formally moved by the Under Secretary of State. There has been up to this time no example of an Amendment proposed in Committee to a Resolution of this kind, and, although it must be added that no attempt has ever been made to submit such an Amendment, so that while there is no precedent in favour of the proceeding, it may be said that there is no precedent against it. I cannot say that it is not a fair Parliamentary reply to the reference to this Committee to say that this late period of the Session renders it difficult to examine the accounts, but I desire to safeguard the Committee against its being supposed to be in order to submit any abstract Amendment as an alternative.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I may say that, after your intimation, Sir, I will not submit my Amendment, so as not even to provoke a semblance of precedent.

*(11.3.) SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I think the Government may be congratulated on the admirably clear and lucid statement which has been submitted to us to-night by my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for India—a statement which was not only interesting and instructive in itself, but which was satisfactory to the Committee, and will be satisfactory to the country from every possible point of view. Allow me to make one observation, following upon those which have been submitted to the Committee by the hon. Member for Northampton, with regard to the restriction that is placed now—by the ruling of the Chair, and also by the action of the House, in consequence of the alteration of the Rules of Procedure—upon this annual Debate. I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Northampton in feeling the utmost regret that the old system has been departed from which subsisted for so many years in this House whereby, on one night at least in the year, it was open to every Member interested in India to bring forward and submit to this House, on the Motion that Mr. Speaker do leave the Chair, any questions connected with the interests of India which he might think ought to be discussed in this House. It is not generally known that that rule now no longer exists, and that there is not a single opportunity during the whole Parliamentary year when a Member of this House has a right to submit to the House questions of general Indian interest as apart from the finances of India. Turning to the Financial Statement, the first thought that will occur to most of us is the question whether the Government of India is really using its years of

prosperity in such a way as will enable it to pass through what will undoubtedly come, namely, years of adversity—whether the fat kine of the present cycle will provide adequately for the lean kine that are to follow. I believe the answer to that question may be in the affirmative. I think this Committee will feel that the provision which is being made by the Government of India for the recurrence of famine, or the recurrence of pestilence, or the recurrence of war, is, on the whole, a sufficient one. The right hon. Gentleman has not alluded to many of the measures which have been taken during the past year with these various objects in view. He has not referred, for instance, to the expenditure that has been incurred, and that has been rightly incurred, in those sanitary provisions which do guard, to a great extent, our Empire in India from the recurrence of pestilence. The sanitation of India is year after year receiving more and more attention. It is not too much to say that the Medical Department of India is one of the very first of all scientific bodies in the world in this respect; that it does provide most efficiently against the recurrence of those pestilences which at one time devastated India. The past year has seen serious attempts made in India, and supported in the highest quarters in this country, to grapple with such a scourge of the country as leprosy. And that is a point which certainly deserves our congratulatory remarks. With regard to the provision that has been made by the Government of India for providing against the recurrence of famine, I do think some further remarks ought to be made in reply to those that have fallen from the hon. Member for Northampton. The Report of the Famine Commission that was appointed some years ago, which will be in the remembrance of many Members of this House—a Commission which was adorned by the presence of Sir James Caird, one of the first authorities on such subjects—clearly taught the Government of India how it might best provide for the recurrence of famines. It pointed out to the Government of India, that by expenditure on such public undertakings as railways and irrigation works, it might make provision that would be valuable in times of famine. And the hon. Member for Northampton has been really, it seems to me, tilting at a windmill, when he talks about this Famine Fund as something which has been got at by the Government, merely because the Government has spent its famine surpluses upon railways or irrigation works, or other famine protection works of that kind. These are the very methods which Sir James Caird and the Famine Commissioners told us were the only possible methods by which the Government of India could possibly, in any way, provide against the recurrence of famine. That is prevention, and prevention is better than cure. I hope the Government of India and Her Majesty's Secretary of State will take full advantage of this present prosperity, that is so largely caused by the favourable rates of exchange, to push forward and carry out those Government works of public utility which alone can provide against the horrors of famine. The hon. Member for Northampton has spoken of a certain discussion which appears to have been carried on between the Secretary of State and the Government of India, and probably between various Members of the Government of India, and the advisers of the Secretary of State, as to the means by which railway enterprise and extension may best be carried out in India; and the hon. Member has spoken as if he had discovered some mysterious mare's nest. Why, the hon. Member may rest assured that this discussion, on which he has spoken with so much mystery, is nothing more than the discussion of the old, old question that has been debated over and over again in India and elsewhere, and that will always be debated, namely, the question whether it is better to carry out such works by State control, by State monopoly, and by the purse of the nation, or by private enterprise. The same question, in its other aspects, may, as we all know, be discussed in the form of land nationalisation, and in every form of Socialism. In the Legislative Assembly of Calcutta Sir Alexander Wilson discussed the policy of the Government of India with regard to railway extension. He is President of the Chamber of Commerce of Calcutta and leader of the mercantile community in India, and he appears to have thought railway extension was best carried out by private enterprise and private capital. Sir Charles Elliott, being an official of Public Works and a Member of Council, was inclined to take the view that the Government should undertake those works, and that it would be cheaper and more economical for the Government to do so. And he pointed out, what is very reasonable, namely, that whereas the Government would have to guarantee something like 4 per cent. to the Railway Companies, they could borrow money at 3 per cent., or even something less. Still it must be remembered that in the long run Government control and monopoly is apt to become an extravagant method of management. The cast iron method of a Government Department cannot be made so strictly economical as management by private mercantile firms. Therefore, it is arguable that private enterprise is more economical in the long run than State control, even if the State can obtain capital at a somewhat lower rate of interest. That, I maintain, is the whole story of the discussion between the Governments, of which so much has been made by the hon. Member for Northampton. I do hope, in spite of these discussions, in spite of the attempts to make it appear that the Government of India take one view and the Secretary of State another view in reference to railway extension, I hope they will not be deterred from taking advantage of the clear opportunity presented to them by the fortunate turn in exchange produced by the American silver legislation, to push forward these great works of public utility, whether it be by State construction or by encouragement to private enterprise, which will do so much for the country. I think we may fairly give credit to the Government of India for having prepared during this year's prosperity, and the prosperity of past years, not only for the possible recurrence of famine and pestilence, but also for that of war. Never since I can remember anything of India has there been more confidence felt, whether in this country or in India, in the administration of the military affairs of that country. And it is matter of congratulation on all sides that that distinguished soldier, who is now at the head of the Army in India, Sir Frederick Roberts, has been requested to remain some time longer at that post which he has adorned, in the discharge of those duties which he has carried out so efficiently. I foresee in India that there will be great possibilities to economise our military charges in one way, and I will explain to the Committee why I think so. We now spend large sums in maintaining great bodies of men in various cantonments, apparently doing little else in some cases than watching the armies of our feudatories. The ever increasing loyalty of the Feudatory States of India is a matter which ought to afford us the highest satisfaction. It has been proved beyond doubt by the loyal offers of those Feudatory Princes to provide for the Empire at large against any foreign foe, and also by their more recently expressed willingness to arrange their military affairs in such a way as to enable the Government of India to withdraw those troops in favour of feudatory troops, or at any rate no longer to regard them as simply a watch upon feudatory armies. Attention has been called, by a question in this House to-night, to the fact, recorded in a recent telegram in the *Times*, that a large sum of money will be saved in military expenses to the Empire at large in the dominions of the Maharajah of Mysore by the wise and liberal policy of that Prince and his able advisers. I was glad to hear the answer of my right hon. Friend to that question. I have no doubt the zeal of Mysore in this respect will be imitated in the various other Feudatory States. I think it should be a great matter of satisfaction that the rendition of Mysore to the ancient Royal Family of that State has been so successful that British capital and enterprise are going into Mysore as easily and as confidently as into any other part of India. The Government is to be congratulated, not only on the favourable state of the finances in the past year, but also on the favourable prospects for the future. The prosperity of last year was perhaps largely owing to the advantage gained with regard to opium, which my right hon. Friend has described as of a gambling nature. But the prospect for the future is a far more secure one, founded, as it is, on the American silver legislation. It is, I think, a very remarkable coincidence that this change in the prospects of the Government of

India, from the improved position which silver has taken in the markets of the world, has been exactly synchronous with the resolution come to by the Government of India, and expressed in this House by my right hon. Friend in March last, to consider favourably the hardship suffered by their Uncovenanted Civil Servants in consequence of the loss by exchange. While a few thousands of pounds are lost to the Government of India by their just action in this matter, the improvement in exchange has been rolling back, not merely thousands, or even hundreds of thousands, but millions into their coffers. Sir, before I sit down I desire emphatically to express my own gratitude, and the gratitude of those I represent in this matter, both to the Government and to the Select Committee—to the Government for the justice of their action, and to the Select Committee for the care they have taken in investigating the claims of these men. I believe it is the unanimous feeling of the whole of the so-called Uncovenanted Civil Servants of India, that the Government has acted in this matter, not indeed generously—that would not perhaps have been right—but certainly justly throughout. It is a great gratification to them that the Select Committee specially laid it down for the guidance of the Government, that no distinction in the way of pay and pension should be made between Indian-born and English-born servants of Her Majesty; both, when domiciled in England, will draw their pensions in the currency of this country. Mr. Courtney, I am confident that in the increased and extended co-operation of Indians and Englishmen in India will be found to be the truest solution of all our difficulties there, and the surest foundation of the continued greatness, prosperity, and happiness of the British Empire in India.

(11.28.) **MR. MAC NEILL** (Donegal, S.): I heartily sympathise with the observations made by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down in reference to the Uncovenanted Civil Servants of India. For the most part these Indian Civil Servants were more tax consumers than tax producers. My remaining observation will be on the condition of the people and their sufferings from the malady of irresponsible officialism. The hon. Member opposite justly gave the Government of India credit for doing everything in their power to stamp out this evil malady in Eastern lands, but there are many others which every friend of India will try to stamp out. Here we have in this statement millions on millions of money levied from people who have no voice whatever in its control. My right hon. Friend said I was anxious for a revolution in India. I wish nothing of the kind; but if I were, I think I should have my right hon. Friend as an unconscious collaborateur with me, for he has stated that in this matter he regards the House of Commons, the ultimate Court of Appeal, with general indifference. I am sorry to think that is the case. An hon. Friend of mine told me he only a few days ago refused to obtain a ticket of admission for an Indian gentleman who wished to hear the Indian Budget discussion, because he was ashamed of the way Indian matters were conducted in the House of Commons. This document is very instructive, and at the same time very sad. My contention is, that from generation to generation the Indians have been odiously, mercilessly, and villainously robbed. The persons who are subjected to this extortion are no fewer than 270,000,000, and they inhabit a country seven times larger than Great Britain—a country which is as large as Europe, with the sole exception of Russia, and the mention of Russia reminds me of the statement of Mr. John Bright, that the Government of India was a pure and simple despotism. Out of these 270,000,000 there are no fewer than 40,000,000 who have never known what it is to have a satisfying meal, and from these people this money is ground, more especially in the shape of the Salt Tax. These 40,000,000 of people live on one meal a day, and the effect of the increase of the Salt Tax by eight annas deprived these people of any food for an average of eight days during the year. That is a very scandalous, a very villainous, and a very horrible state of circumstances. Let us see what is the poverty of the people, viewed with reference to their taxable ability. Our exports to Australia average £14 or £15 a head of the population of the colony, while our exports to India only reach 1s. 6d. a head, and it has been computed that the average income of the Indian native, including the few highly paid native officials, is 1½d. per diem. There is a very interesting statement in the Finance Report issued by the Supreme Council in March, 1889. There is some increase in the Indian Railways—about 600 miles; but in the United States the increase was 12,000 miles. If the Government only took up this matter of railway enterprise with energy, there would be an enormous increase. However, I will say it is not, in my humble judgment, the most productive of the works in India. It has been computed that out of every shilling spent in railway enterprise, 8d. makes its way to England. In my view, preference should be given to works of irrigation, which would be more permanent and of greater advantage for the cultivation of the land. Railways may come afterwards. The right hon. Gentleman took a somewhat airy view of the Famine Fund, and he preferred to call it an emergency fund. Lord Lytton instituted it. Did he apply it to the wants of the starving poor? He did nothing of the kind. He pinched it and applied it to the Burmese Expedition.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Worcestershire, Evesham): Lord Lytton had nothing to do with the Burmese Expedition.

MR. MAC NEILL: I beg pardon. It was the Afghan War. It was applied to the war in Afghanistan. Let me show the Under Secretary how the Salt Tax is regarded in the Legislative Council. Two Members of that Council protested warmly against the Salt Tax and the Income Tax. I am bound to say the two gentlemen were not European Members, but natives, who, in spite of the officialism and the manner in which natives are socially corrupted, had some regard for the suffering of their people. One of these gentlemen, Mr. Nulkar, said—

> "As regards the Salt Tax, I wish to draw the attention of your Lordships' Government to the extreme hardship and privation from which the great bulk of the Indian population suffers in consequence of the enhancement of the Salt Duty, which was sanctioned two years ago."

It was sanctioned on January 19, 1888, and was the direct Act of Lord Cross.

***SIR J. GORST**: It was passed like all other taxes by the Legislature of India. No doubt it was approved by the Secretary of State.

MR. MAC NEILL: If I may talk so of the Indian Legislature, the more shame to them for passing it. I wish they had a Plan of Campaign out in India. Mr. Nulkar continued—

> "I am no believer in statistical conclusions either way, when they are based solely on a comparison between issues or exports and imports of salt within short corresponding periods. A better and more trustworthy proof of the privations to which the poor are reduced in parts of India is furnished by the new laws which have had to be passed, preventing the use of salt earth and similar substance for edible salt, because men do not resort to such extreme devices unless they are hard pressed to do so by the high rate which the Salt Tax has now reached."

That reminds me of the Irish peasants collecting lettuce during the famine, only they were allowed to collect lettuce and were not put in prison for it. I may remind the House that in 1882 Mr. Kynaston Cross stated that the reduction in the Salt Tax was equal in its effect to the repeal of the Corn Laws in England. I would like to see the person who would attempt to re-enact the Corn Laws, and yet we are preying on the vitals of the starving poor of India. I come to the Income Tax. The poorest man who pays Income Tax in this country has at least £150 a year. In India they pay Income Tax on £34, and the cost of its collection from the people, who are utterly unable to pay it, is at least 25 per cent. Mr. Hossein, another member of the Legislative Council, says—

> "In the full belief in the justice of the cause I have undertaken to advocate, and in the moderation of my request, I earnestly implore that Your Excellency's Government will be pleased to grant the relief I have asked for by taking an early opportunity to exempt all annual income below 1,000 rupees from the operation of the Income Tax Law."

That is, that Income Tax should in future be charged on £68, instead of £34; and the Viceroy and Sir David Barbour were much affected by the request. Sir David said he would consider it, and also the circumstances as regards the difficulty of collecting the tax. I wish, again, to direct the attention of the House to the contemptuous disregard of promises made by the British Government, again and again, to give the natives a fair chance of the official appointments of their own land. They have been deliberately excluded from all those appointments, and that exclusion necessitates a vast increase of expenditure because the appointments are given to Europeans, when they could be equally well, possibly better, filled by natives, at at least one-third of the expense. Of course, I do not say the natives could fill every appointment. A Departmental Committee of the India Office, in 1860, reported that—

> "The difficulties offered to a native living in India, and residing in England for a time, are so great that as a general rule it is almost impossible for a native successfully to compete at the periodical examinations held in England. Were this irregularity removed, we should no longer be exposed to the charge of keeping promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope."

The hon. Member for Northampton read a letter of Lord Lytton's three years ago, stating that "the British Government, having had their choice between forcing the natives out of employment and cheating them, deliberately determined to cheat them. Here are the statistics of natives in high Government offices. Out of 2,357 appointments in the higher Uncovenanted Service, natives of India hold 188. The effect of a thing like that on the revenues of India is simply enormous, having regard to the fact that natives can do the work at one-third of the cost for which Europeans, however economically the Service may be conducted, can discharge the duties. The right hon. Gentleman is correct in stating that five natives passed the last examination, but, according to this memorandum I have got, although five natives passed the Civil Service Examination this year, only 12 have succeeded in doing so during the past decade. I would direct the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to page 6 of this financial statement, paragraph 6, because it is there that Sir David Barbour speaks in animated language of what the right hon. Gentleman calls the financial and moral considerations, placing the financial considerations first. Sir David Barbour there says:—

> "The chief improvement in the current year appears under the head of Opium. There is an increase of Rx.286,400 in Opium Revenue; there is a decrease of Rx.708,800 in Opium Expenditure. The total improvement under Opium is consequently Rx.995,200. In the Budget Estimate the price of Bengal opium was taken at Rs.1,070 a chest. It has proved to be Rs.1,136."

I will not speak of the effects of the opium on China, though I believe I should be technically right in doing so upon this Budget, as a portion of the revenue is obtained through forcing opium down the throats of the Chinese at the point of the bayonet. This is what our moral Government has done. I would say this, that the English Government are the first dominators and rulers of India who have derived, as we do now, a solid monetary gain from the vice of the people. Opium was drunk and smoked before our time, but it was in contradiction of the religious rights of the people, and was put down in one State, Burma, though it now flourishes under our rule. In that State to sell, drink, or smoke opium was punished by death. Perhaps it may be asked, in reference to this opium traffic in India, what difference there is between that and the alcoholic traffic here. There is a very considerable difference, because our Government in India are the proprietors of the traffic, whereas in the other traffic or trade a man carries it on at his own expense; and in India the Government, by purchasing the crop, put an artificial value upon the production of opium for revenue purposes. It has been stated, and will possibly be stated by the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham (Sir R. Temple), who knows a great deal about the subject, that this Indian tax on opium is simply a device to restrict the indiscriminate use of opium. I say that is not so. The best lands have been taken out of cultivation for the purpose of producing this opium, and the Government are directly engaged in trafficking in the sin and sufferings of the people of India for the purposes of raising revenue. By this traffic the people of India are demoralised. The lands under cultivation of the poppy are no fewer in British India than 500,000 acres, and, strange to say, for the successful cultivation of opium nothing but the best land is used. I will take the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham as a witness. In 1869, in reply to a question, he stated that we should extend the cultivation and ensure a plentiful supply, because if we did not the Chinese would do it themselves, and they had better have our good opium rather than their own indifferent opium. What is the meaning of good opium? It means strong opium, and indifferent opium means weak opium. Out of 300,000,000 of Chinese, only 1,000,000 use our opium, and that because it is forced upon them. The increase in the consumption of opium of late years is very great, and Canon Wilberforce, in a great speech on his return from India, declared that the opium was prepared in double strength in order to poison our Indian fellow subjects. There is something perfectly horrible in throwing temptation in another man's way for gross and filthy gain. I can understand a man being influenced by passion, but when men deliberately traffic, as the Government of these people have done, upon the sins and sufferings of those under their charge, then such conduct appears to me to be too infamous to characterise. Yet this is the conduct of the Government of India in the present day. You know yourselves what opium is, because you refuse to allow opium cultivation in Bengal on account of its disastrous effects. Just for one moment let me refer to the famines. We know that India is the land of famines. The hon. Member for Evesham knows that, for he headed a relief fund on the occasion of one famine in which no fewer than a population as large as the City of London succumbed. Statisticians have computed the loss of life from war from 1793 to 1887 in Europe was 4,500,000; the loss of life from famine in India from 1802 to 1879 was no fewer than 14,000,000. The charge I make against the Government is that of diverting 500,000 of acres of the best land in India from the growth of cereals to the growth of opium for the mere purpose of revenue. I wish to say something about opium in Burma. As I have said, under the old Burmese Government, the man who sold, drank, or smoked opium was sentenced to death; and, in regard to Burma, you are now demoralising these people for the sake of gross metallic gain. The opium dens are increasing in numbers every year, because they mean a source of revenue to the Government. In British India these dens number no fewer than 10,000, and Mr. Caine, who was in India the year before last, has given a terrific blow to the traffic by the harrowing picture of the scenes he had witnessed in these dens. I have witness after witness — missionaries, medical men, travellers, and English clergymen, like Canon Wilberforce—who say the people of India would give anything to be rid of the traffic. I want to show what effect financially the opium has on the revenue, and that we cannot rely upon it. We have got the authority of the greatest financier of the time that the opium traffic in India is undoubtedly precarious. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian ten years ago, on the Indian Budget, said, speaking of the opium trade in India—

> "None of us, I hope, in this House view this matter with indifference. I am certainly of opinion that opium revenue, instead of being a sound foundation, is a slippery and dangerous part of our Indian revenue."

Last year a Motion was brought forward in reference to compulsorily forcing it upon China, and the Under Secretary of State for India then got up in his place and said that the opium trade in India was necessary, because Persia was growing very good opium. In the time of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), it was said that if the opium revenue failed India would be in a state of bankruptcy. If that be so, if you are corrupting them, and guaranteeing there should be certain famines at certain specified times for the depopulation of the country, I cannot congratulate you upon your Indian rule. In listening to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India, and then to that of my hon. Friend, I was forcibly reminded of what a great Indian citizen said to me. He said that I am the best person to defend the cause of India. If they could not have an English Member, then they should have an Irish Member, for he had seen in his own country the evils under which the people of India suffered, injustice promoted by malice or by class hatreds. But the mean arts of the past will no longer avail. You gained India by what I would call successful Piggottism. You got it by murder and by fraud. Are you going to keep it by demoralisation and starvation? You may do so for some time, but the people of India will soon become alive to their own interests, and will seek to govern themselves according to their own principles and for their own land.

*(12.10.) SIR R. TEMPLE: I shall not detain the Committee long at this late hour, but I must offer a few remarks upon the speech which has just been delivered by the hon. Member for Donegal. I do not doubt his good intentions, but I am sure the Committee knows the exuberance of eloquence in which he has just indulged. I wondered whether the hon. Gentleman, as he resumed his seat, reflected that he is a citizen of the British Empire, and that he was addressing his countrymen regarding an Empire founded by them. Before I proceed to answer some of the hon. Member's points, I feel bound to offer some words of explanation as to my own part in the famines of India. The hon. Member has got hold of the wrong end of the story. I have been concerned in three famines. The first was in Bengal, and there I really commanded, and practically no lives were lost. The second was in Bombay, and there, too, I had the command. On that occasion, despite much success, there was some loss of life. But the causes were mainly pestilence and scourge, over which we had no control. In the third case, at Madras, would the hon. Member be surprised to know that I never commanded there at all? I certainly was employed as a counsellor and adviser during the early stages of that famine, but I had no administrative authority. I stayed but a short time, and during that time the famine had made but little progress. Afterwards, the famine became intensified, and I cannot undertake to answer for what occurred, though the authorities struggled bravely against a distress prolonged over two years. But I look back with thankfulness to the success which, under Providence, was vouchsafed to us in the saving of life on the two previous occasions. Blessed results were obtained by enormous efforts and sacrifices on the part of the Government, of myself, and of my officers. As my time is short, I will deal for one moment with the allegations of the hon. Member regarding the opium traffic. I understand him to raise no particular objection to the Bombay system, because there the opium goes straight to the port of exportation. His objection is against the Bengal system. Now, Sir, this subject has been debated four times in this House of Commons, and four times it has been answered *terque quaterque*, and now, though I answer it for the fifth time, it is like slaying of the slain. The pictures which the hon. Member has painted for Bengal simply represent parts of the fiscal system. Nothing would be easier than by a stroke of the pen to assimilate the system to that of Bombay. But the results would be two-fold. First, there would be a loss of revenue; and, secondly, there would be a great deal of smuggling and illicit consumption among our own Indian people. Now, to avoid those two objections or evils this Bengal system has been devised. If mis-represented unintentionally, or if described under radical misconception, the system can be construed as having a bad appearance. But to any person who understands the case, and who looks into the administrative particulars, its real merits will be apparent. Now as regards the Chinese trade, I entirely adhere to the passage of my writing which he has quoted. As for our encouraging the taste for opium among the Chinese, the House may recollect that the Chinese themselves are the main producers. They produce about five times the amount that India produces, and the Indian production bears the same proportion to that of China that the champagne of France bears to all the other wines of France and Spain put together. And as to the allegation that we are converting good lands, that could be sown with grain, for the purposes of opium, does the hon. Member remember that the Chinese are determined to have this drug, and that they are prepared to pay very highly for it, and that its cultivation and production is very profitable to the Bengal peasant?

MR. MAC NEILL: Profitable?

*SIR R. TEMPLE: Yes, most profitable; and if our system were swept away to-morrow, still there would be this cultivation, still the poppy fields in the spring would bloom with the flowers white, pink, and purple. And as it would be untaxed, probably it would be extended. In the absence of our preventive system it would be also impossible to prevent our Indian people consuming the drug. Still the traffic would continue; still there would be the opium clippers or steamers plying between Calcutta and the Chinese ports. Then, Sir, there are one or two other points in the hon. Member's speech that I ought to answer. Does the House recollect that touching, that moving piece of statistics which he detailed to the House about 40,000,000 people in the Indian continent being insufficiently nourished? Well, 40,000,000 sounds a large number, but, after all, that is only one-eighth of the Indian population, so that, even if that figure was correct—and I deny its correctness—it would amount to one person out of eight who was insufficiently nourished. I venture to say that in the Metropolitan area more that that proportion would be found of persons insufficiently nourished. But where does he get that 40,000,000? About 10 years ago, in the famine times, that figure was mentioned in a statistical estimate by Sir William Hunter. But that was a general statement of his opinion. He was a highly qualified officer. He was in this case a statistician mainly. I do not disparage him, but that was only his individual opinion, based on no particular details or any special data, and it was never accepted by any authority in India, and was never admitted by the Government. Thus it was an estimate to be taken as such, and not a known fact to be quoted against the Indian Government in this House. Then the hon. Member quoted from a Report in regard to salt earth, as if that were a proof of misery. But that was in the nature of smuggling. Those who got that salt out of the salt earth have it free of taxation. It is only a proof of their sagacity. Again, Sir, the hon. Member told us that the minimum of income for Income Tax assessment in India was £34, and he contrasted that with £150, the minimum in this country. But, Sir, inasmuch as the value of labour is four times greater in this country than it is in India, a man who really had £34 of income annually would be better off in India than the Englishman on £150 is in England. But how does the hon. Member get that £34? He gets it, I see, by taking the Indian minimum of rupees—500—and reducing it to the pound at the rate of 1s. 4d. exchange. But really the minimum income was more like £50 when the Income Tax was fixed. I remember very well that 500 rupees was taken as £50, and it was £50 then according to the exchange, and it will soon be £50 again. But, Sir, that comparison, I submit, is insufficient, because the income is not in pounds at all. The man knows nothing about pounds. He subsists upon the rupees, and upon that standard his income is more like £50 than £34. I say, therefore, that, according to this comparison, the minimum in India is really more favourable to the Indian people than the minimum in England is to the English people. So much for that. Then there are one or two points in the very interesting speech of the hon. Member for Northampton. I am much obliged to him for the kind expressions he used towards me personally. But, subject to your good ruling, Mr. Courtney, I shall hardly be able to say a word about one matter regarding which he indirectly challenged me, namely, the elective principle for the natives in the Legislative Councils. I am prepared to avow and adhere to, both inside and outside Parliament, every word that I have ever uttered or written on that subject, and I hope that some day in this House I may have an opportunity of explaining the rough and ready plans which I had formed for carrying out that object. But may I remark on what the hon. Member said about the salt in Bengal? He pointed to a reduction in two successive years of the quantity of salt consumed in Bengal, but that was in the quantity of the English salt.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: On the total salt.

*SIR R. TEMPLE: On the English salt, Sir.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I was careful to say the total salt.

*SIR R. TEMPLE: The explanation is this. The hon. Member has got hold of the consumption of salt as given in the Calcutta Returns. And what has happened is this, that, owing to certain commercial speculations, the price of English salt in Calcutta had risen, and consequently there was a diminution of the consumption. But, at the same time, the supply was kept up by salt which came down to Bengal from Northern India. So that the result is not so much a variation on the total amount of salt consumed, but a variation in the source of supply. The people of Bengal have consumed much the same as they formerly consumed, but instead of getting it wholly from England, they got it only in the main from England and partly from other sources. The House has heard the moving description given from a certain book by Mr. Thorburn regarding the Moslem peasantry in the Punjab. The hon. Member seemed to consider the conditions described in that book as worse than those of Kashmir, which were described in this House as justifying the deposition of the Native Prince. But what was the case? The book only showed that certain sections of the Punjab population are deeply in debt; that they are constantly renewing their bonds to the money-lenders, and that at each renewal they had to submit to terms more and more usurious. That is regrettable, and I trust that it will be the subject of special and remedial legislation, just as similar evils which were experienced under my rule in Bombay were remedied by legislation. But these evils are very hard for Kings, or Governments, or Parliaments, to cure. What is the real cause? It is just this: The Moslem peasants under British rule have been invested with proprietary rights in land —rights which they had never possessed before. That land had risen in selling value from year to year; and the consequence was that its owners, finding that they had real security to offer, ran into debt for the sake of marriage festivities and other social extravagances. This is one of those evils which bring no shame whatever to the British Government. Much is said by the hon. Member about Mr. Maconochie. He was an excellent officer, and his Report is said to have revealed destitution among the people. I do not find anything of the kind, and I do not know to what Report the hon. Member was alluding.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I referred to page 3 of the Report, which was laid upon the Table last year. I did not read it, being anxious not to take up time, but it contained matter much stronger than any given in my summary.

*SIR R. TEMPLE: I have just been looking into the Reports of Mr. Maconochie, and they seem satisfactory, on the whole, regarding the condition of the people. There are other officers who have reported, and I find they generally say that, on the whole, the people are fairly well nourished. May I add one word about the Famine Insurance Fund to which the hon. Member has again adverted? This Famine Insurance Fund is a highly technical and curious expression which, in my opinion, ought never to have been invented, and I am quite sure that those Indian Authorities who invented it would never have done so if they had foreseen that it would be turned to such purposes of argument as it has been on previous occasions in this House. It was merely a Resolution on the part of the Government of India that they would provide such a sum as might be applied to the reduction of debt and the construction of works to prevent famine, to the extent of about £15,000,000 in each decade. That was a large undertaking, and I contend that successive Viceroys did really endeavour to act up to it, though some years have been so full of requirements for Imperial defence that in these years they have not been able to carry out their intentions. But in the course of these 10 years they will be found to have very nearly fulfilled every intention, and to have set aside a sum not much less than £15,000,000 for these purposes; and I say that, on the whole, they have done very well. And now, Sir, before resuming my seat, let me congratulate my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State upon the Statement he has been able to make to us. He has shown to us that India, despite the depreciation of the rupee, and despite the vast expenditure incurred out of revenue for military operations and for famine relief, is incurring year after year a capital outlay from State resources by money borrowed partly in India and partly in England, under circumstances which combine in one hand State administration with private enterprise. It shows, also, that much has been done for Imperial defence. The hon. Member said it was better for the people that they should be saved the cost of keeping up a large Army. Supposing we did not keep Armies in India, and British rule were upset, what would become of the people then? Why, they would be pillaged and devastated by fire and sword. The Statement showed, further, that, despite all that may be said by hon. Members opposite, the people of India bear the lightest taxation, perhaps, of any people in the world—far lighter than they ever knew under their own Native dynasties. As to the Salt Tax, it is absolutely the only tax paid by the masses of the people, and per head it is so small that it is hardly possible to represent the incidence in figures. The people themselves have a resourcefulness in famine which is wonderful, and which would hardly be shown by any European nation in similar circumstances. Then they evince an aptitude to strike in with enterprise whenever they have a chance. Look at the way they filled up the gap in the Cotton Trade during the American Civil War. Look, also, at the way they have seized the chance of assisting in the food supply of the United Kingdom. Year by year they are advancing in education. I may call the hon. Member for Northampton to bear witness of that. He has been to Bombay, at all events, and he has seen a grand scene of progress and education and enlightenment. I have no doubt the pious Hindoos in the Congress there almost worshipped him. They believe in the transmigration of souls, and I almost think they must have imagined that the souls of some of the mythological heroes had migrated into the stately form of the hon. Member for Northampton. I shall resume my seat with much gratitude to the House for the attention with which they have listened to me, but I might have done better if I had had more arguments to answer—if the hon. Member had only started a few more hares for me to hunt. As it is, I feel like the old lion perishing for lack of prey.

*(12.38.) **MR. SEYMOUR KEAY** (Elgin and Nairn): I am glad the hon. Baronet is going to remain in his place, because I think I shall be able to start one or two more hares than he expects. I do not wish to make the slightest semblance of an attack upon the hon. Baronet, because I have always known him, both in India and in this House, as a first-class official optimist. I am, therefore, not surprised at the character of the speech he has just delivered. He stated, truly, that he left Madras before any great number of deaths had occurred through the Madras Famine of 1877-78. But I feel it my duty to tell the Committee that the hon. Member, when he made the recommendations, to which he himself has alluded, before he left Madras, unfortunately made among these recommendations one, namely, that the allowance to be paid to the famishing creatures who came to the relief stations should be restricted to one pound of grain per day, and the enormous number of deaths which subsequently occurred were traced to the smallness of the famine ration that the hon. Baronet had prescribed. Public opinion placed on the shoulders of the hon. Baronet a great share of the responsibility for the disasters that occurred after he left Madras. I would not have alluded to this point had he not alluded to it himself. Then there was a remark which fell from the hon. Member for North Kensington (Sir Roper Lethbridge) on a different subject altogether, but it is one to which I think it is very necessary to allude. It is this: In counselling the Government of India and the Secretary of State to make what he considered to be a fair use of the Army in India, he said that there were large forces of British troops at present locked up in the Native States, which had been placed in these States for the purpose of watching the Native Princes. He even alluded to the largest of all these forces, which is stationed in the cantonment of Secunderabad, a place in the neighbourhood of which I have spent the best part of 28 years. The hon. Member himself has had a long Anglo-Indian career, and I am rather surprised that he should have brought so little knowledge to bear on the subject as to have made the statement which he did. In the first place, the statement he has made is a decidedly unfounded reflection upon these Native States. It is a gross reflection upon them to say that they need, or that the British Government think they need, large forces of British troops to be kept at their capitals for the purpose of watching them.

*SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE: I am sure the hon. Member does not wish to mis-represent me. I said nothing of the kind, and I certainly intended to imply the very opposite of what the hon. Member has now imputed to me. What I did say was that in the bad past there had been times when large bodies of our troops were locked up in the utterly useless occupation of watching with hostile intent the armies of our feudatories, but I put it that now the loyalty of the feudatory States—I specially mentioned Mysore, but I might also have mentioned Hyderabad—that the loyalty of these feudatories was so recognised that the forces which were formerly locked up in this useless allocation will now be set free to be occupied in a different way.

*MR. SEYMOUR KEAY: The hon. Gentleman has substantially repeated the statement I made. The hon. Gentleman admits that he had suggested that in past days there were certain large British forces placed in their capitals and elsewhere for the purpose of watching the native States. The hon. Gentleman ought to know that all these large British forces kept in native States were originally placed there under special Treaties, that the Native Princes not only sought, but paid for them, in most cases by capitalised sums, for the purpose of securing their protection against their own domestic enemies. Now, I do not know how the hon. Member can possibly assert that when a native State made a payment like that, and when the British Government were in consequence bound to place a body of well disciplined troops in that State for the purpose of protecting it from its internal and domestic enemies, I do not know how he can assert that at any time the British troops were set to watch the Native Princes and their armies. Moreover, it is perfectly clear that the forces in question are absolutely locked up in the places in which they are located, because we have in our pockets at this moment the whole capitalised sum which has been paid for the providing of these forces for all time. It is quite clear that if these troops were removed, the first thing to be done would necessarily be to restore to the Native Princes the capitalised amount which we now hold belonging to them, and in virtue of which we keep these troops at their disposal. But, at the risk of detaining the Committee, I think it will be positively my duty to call the attention of the Under Secretary to a few points to which I think it is desirable that the attention of the Committee should be directed, as I believe, for the first time. The right hon. Gentleman began his speech by telling us that it would not be very long or very difficult of understanding, because it dealt with what he called a kind of general level of prosperity. I wish, for my part, that I could at all endorse the views of the right hon. Gentleman on this matter. But I think, by anyone who knows India, this will be taken to be the most important point of all on which the right hon. Gentleman himself rests the principal part of his case. I warn him that in what I am about to say I shall call on him to travel far outside the brief which has been furnished to him by the India Office. He told us that the Land Revenue is so mild in its incidence that it only amounts to one-half of the net produce of the soil.

*SIR J. GORST: I said net rent.

*MR. SEYMOUR KEAY: It is just the same.

*SIR J. GORST: No; I specially corrected that. I meant the net value of the rent.

*MR. SEYMOUR KEAY: I had not the good fortune to be in the House when the right hon. Gentleman used the words, and I am indebted to an hon. Member for telling me what the words were. Now, I take it that he means net rent or net produce in the same sense as is used in all Indian Revenue Reports. An attempt is made to discover, in the first place, what is the gross produce of the land. There is, then, an attempt made to deduct from this gross produce the expenses which the cultivator has had to pay, and then the Revenue Departments consider that a certain amount is left in his pocket out of which they desire to take a half, leaving the other half in his possession. Now, what I want to bring specially before the attention of the right hon. Gentleman is this. I want to say—if there were time, I could easily prove—that instead of the Land Tax at present enforced being only one-half of the net rent, it is immensely more; I hold that sometimes it oversteps it so much that in many parts of India the cultivators are at present living on the little capital that they possess, and are gradually getting more and more into the hands of the usurer. I want to explain to the right hon. Gentleman how he is deceived in this matter by the official documents. First of all, there is an absurd attempt made to find out the gross produce of a holding or of a district. There is what is called a crop experiment made by the district officer. The officer goes down and he looks at a holding. He picks out a field which, in his judgment, appears to be an average field, with growing corn upon it. Then he picks out a few square yards of what he thinks an average kind of growing corn, and he then orders that the corn on these square yards should be cut and threshed out and measured. The result, of course, is obvious. They thresh out the corn which is cut from these few yards, and they multiply the result by the whole extent of the field. That is the absurd way in which they get at the gross value of the holding. But they have now got to deduct some reasonable amount for the sustenance of the family, in order to find what is the net rent. This, again, is done in the most grossly unjust manner. I can point the right hon. Gentleman to proofs that, in nine cases out of ten, instead of allowing to the Indian cultivator a deduction for produce that he and his family would reasonably eat, they make him an allowance which is little more than one-seventh of the true cost of cultivation. On an average holding of 10 acres they allow for the sustenance of half a man and one bullock during nine months, instead of allowing for the sustenance of one man, one woman, with, on an average, three children, and two bullocks during the 12 months of the year. By deducting this mock sum from the supposed gross rent the net rent is arrived at, and all I can say is that the calculation is as absurd as that which the Chief Secretary for Ireland made in regard to the Irish Land Purchase Bill. He said the net rent was the gross rent after the deduction of the local rates only without any other outgoings, and the Indian Government, through their officials, have made as absurd a definition as between gross rent and net rent. The third way in which the Indian cultivator is mulcted is in regard to the prices at which he is supposed to be able to dispose of his produce. How do our Revenue Departments fix these supposed prices? They take the whole of the villages, small and great, throughout the whole district, some of which villages only consist of a few houses, some of which have no corn growing at all, and they take the price which obtains at these up-country rural villages, where there is no corn growing, and where the price of grain is, therefore, very high. They then take the price of grain in the large markets, where there is a plethora of it, where it naturally, therefore, sells cheap, and where, in point of fact, the mass of the crops are disposed of at low prices. They then take the united prices of the whole of these villages and districts, small and great, and add them together, and if there are, say, 30, they simply divide by 30, and say that they have got the average price of corn. These are statements which, if I may venture to say so, have never been made in the House before, and I trust the importance of the subject will be my excuse for having ventured for so long a time as I have done to trespass upon the patience of the Committee.

*(1.0.) MR. PROVAND: India, Sir, has, it must be remembered, no representatives in this House; and, therefore, it becomes the business of all the Members to give attention to Indian interests. India has a Budget in which the Revenue and Expenditure approximate to the Revenue and the Expenditure of the United Kingdom, and is brought in during the last days of the Session, when the strength of the House is probably not a quarter of its ordinary strength, and when only a few hours of the night can be given to its discussion. There are in this House at least two or three score Members who take an interest in India, either from past or present connection with that country. There are Members who belong, or formerly belonged, to the Civil and Military Establishments, and Members who are, or have been, connected with India through commerce. Perhaps I should most strongly object to the fact that this Return we have had to consider before coming here to-night has only been issued to-day, and the statement of the right hon. Gentle-

man the Under Secretary for India, although remarkably clear, does not make up for the opportunity which has been denied to us of going over the figures in this elaborate explanatory statement before we came to the House to listen to the discussion. I would say a word or two of congratulation to the Indian Government on the position in which they find themselves this year, especially as that position is different from the experience of many past years. Since 1873, I may say, the normal Indian Budget has shown a deficit from one cause or another, but chiefly by loss from exchange; whereas the improved position on the present occasion is due to a profit on exchange. The Famine Fund, of which we have heard something, but not as much as is necessary, is very largely a question of book-keeping. We have heard from several speakers comments on the Salt Tax, which presses severely on the poorest people. The Revenue from this source has increased 7 per cent. in a single year, as a consequence of the increased duty, and to this we have to add the increased price the people of India have now to pay in consequence of the cost of the salt itself being raised by the combination of salt mine-owners in Cheshire, and by the increased rates of freight which have had to be paid during the last year or two. Therefore, we hope that the advisers of the Indian Government will give their attention to doing something in their improved financial position to lessening the Salt Tax rather than to promise that they will provide for the Famine Fund which has never, so far as we have heard, been anything more than a question of book-keeping. I would make one remark as to what fell from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Donegal, who made a terrible statement as to the circumstances attending the connection of India with this country. There is no doubt that the early wars in India —the wars of Clive and others—tell many a story which it would be better could not now be told against us. There was a great deal of ruthless and bad behaviour on our part at the time, but there is no man who reads the modern history of India, and compares it with what it was before our subjugation of the country, who can come to any other conclusion than that the position of the populations of India has been immensely improved in every respect since we have taken charge of it. Before that time the population was kept down chiefly by two causes—famines and wars. And, indeed, the wars were not wars in the sense in which we understand the term in Europe now; they were simply butcheries of entire populations by some ruthless conqueror who found enough troops to follow him. Another remark fell from the hon. Gentleman with reference to our connection with China as regards the opium traffic. He stated that the traffic was forced upon China by us. Well, the only foundation for that statement is that we undertook, in 1842, what is known as the Opium War; but since then there has been no compulsion of any kind, and the Chinese Authorities could stop the importation of opium at any moment. The matter has been one of open negotiation, and the cultivation of opium has increased enormously in China, notwithstanding the importation of the Indian article, and although the Chinese Government passes all sorts of laws against it. The Mandarins themselves post up large yellow notices, saying that this or that must not be done with opium, but, nevertheless, it is cultivated year after year in exactly the same way. If we did not send an ounce of opium to China it would merely increase the planting of poppies in China; and the Chinaman, instead of getting fine opium from India, would have to put up with the inferior quality which he cultivates himself. I would add to my remarks one protest. We are going to meet in three months—we are going to change our habits—and I trust the Under Secretary for India will see that the Indian Budget is brought on at an earlier period of the next Session. The explanatory statement we have had to-day should, I understand, have been circulated three or four months ago, and I have no doubt it was made up in India early enough to have permitted that we should have it in this House in plenty of time for this Debate. Therefore, I hope that next Session the same state of things will not occur again, and that we shall not have to wait until the end of the Session for the discussion of this important subject.

(1.20.) **SIR W. PLOWDEN**: I do not intend to discuss this matter at any great length. I have risen for a particular purpose. The hon. Member for Northampton, in the course of the speech which he delivered, spoke about the necessity for reducing our armed forces in India in order to fill the bellies of the unfortunate natives, but the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham retorted where would the bellies be if our Armies were reduced? While the Government are attentive enough in some respects, I say they are not paying due regard to the proper arming of the country. We understand the Viceroy and his Council requested four years ago that the batteries of artillery in India should be re-armed. The present nine-pounder muzzle-loading gun is entirely inferior to the guns that could be brought to bear against it in any campaign by any European Power. This inferiority might have a most disastrous effect upon the Indian Army. It is essential that they should be supplied with more powerful guns. It was stated on a previous occasion that 96 guns of the new pattern would be furnished, but I should like to ask how many batteries have been furnished with the new gun? I do not believe all the batteries of the country are armed with it, and it is a matter of the greatest importance to the country. I believe that the gentleman who is in charge of the forces in India will be one of the first to appeal to the Government of this country to carry out this absolutely necessary proceeding. I believe it is very much to the discredit of the War Office in this country that such a state of things should exist, but I hope the matter will be remedied as soon as possible.

(1.25.) **SIR J. GORST**: With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member who has just spoken, I desire to say that the Government of India have been in communication with the Government of this country on the subject of procuring the guns to which the hon. Member has referred, but it has been found impossible by the War Department to supply them as rapidly as the interests of India would appear to demand. I will not detain the House at this hour of the night by making another speech. There are one or two questions to which I think I ought to reply. In the first place, it was not my fault, nor was it the fault of the leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), or of Her Majesty's Government, that this Debate did not occur at an earlier period of the Session. What would the House say if, a month or two ago, the exciting business that was then occupying the time of the House had been interrupted in order that the Indian Budget might come on? With regard to the complaints made as to the delay in getting documents ready, I wish to say that last year I made a great effort to have all Papers connected with Indian finance ready as soon as possible. The documents were laid on the Table very early, but what was the consequence?—the Debate was delayed, the figures were corrected, and they did not prove to be of as great advantage as was anticipated. This year I did not press the authorities in India or in the India Office to hasten the production of the Papers. With regard to the particular Report referred to by the hon. Member for Northampton, I have to say that every effort was made to produce that Report as early as possible, and it was actually in the hands of the printer early in June; and if it was not produced in time it was not my fault, or the fault of any of my officials, but of the printer, over whom we have no control whatever.

***MR. BRADLAUGH**: It was only laid on the Table in dummy last night.

***SIR J. GORST**: Yes, formally, but it was in the printers' hands. The other document referred to is the explanatory Memorandum. That Memorandum is simply a printed statement, made in accordance with what has lately been the custom of the India Office for the purpose of saving a good deal of the time of the House. It has been laid on the Table of the House by myself, in pursuance of the practice recently adopted by the First Lord of the Admiralty and of the Secretary of State for War, so that they should not have to make a long statement, such as was the custom in the introduction of the Army and Navy Estimates. I may be asked why I did not lay it on the Table of the House last June. The Committee will remember that what happened last year was this. We had three sets of figures to consider—first, with reference to the Financial Statement in reference to India in March last year; then the figures of my explanatory Memorandum, which were laid on the Table of the

House early in June; and then the figures which were brought forward on the day that we were discussing the Bill; and hence, with regard to my Memorandum, I believe that, so far from it being explanatory, it was confusing. There are one or two questions which the hon. Member for Northampton has put to me with regard to the case of Mr. Crawford. He has asked to be compensated in regard to some part of the costs to which he was subjected, and the matter is now under the consideration of the Government of India. No decision has as yet been arrived at. I am also asked about the expression on page 12 of this Statement, namely:—

> "Including capital expenditure on steamboat service and suspense account, but excluding other indirect charges,"

which refers to furlough and pension charges not taken into account in the railway estimates. The hon. Member for Northampton has read to me what purports to be an extract from a Despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, and he challenges me to say categorically whether such a Despatch has been delivered or not. To that challenge I say I decline to reply, and I decline for this reason: If what the hon. Member has quoted is an official Despatch, the possession and knowledge of it can only have been obtained by the commission of an act which is a criminal offence under the laws of India, and, therefore, I decline to say whether what purports to be an extract from a Despatch is or is not authentic. With regard to the question of the extension of the Indian railways, I may say that a correspondence is at present going on between the Secretary of State and the Government of India on the subject. No conclusion has as yet been arrived at, but when the correspondence is brought to a conclusion, if the hon. Member will move that the documents be laid on the Table of the House I shall be happy to produce them. The same remark applies to the question of the broad and narrow gauge. I understand that what the hon. Member (Mr. Bradlaugh) quoted to the House was the excited language of the chairman of a narrow gauge railway, in a speech which he delivered in the City of London. This gentleman drew a most alarming picture of the dreadful results that would follow any interference with the narrow gauge railways. There, again, there is a correspondence going on between the Secretary of State and the Government of India with reference to the question of the gauge, and it is not the first correspondence of the kind. As many years ago there was a battle of gauges in this country, so now there is the same thing in India. As you may readily suppose, there are questions raised as to which is the best gauge. That correspondence is also going on, and when it is brought to a conclusion I shall be happy to produce it. I protest against the practice, which is followed very largely in discussions in this House on the affairs of the Government of India, of communicating the contents of confidential documents, as has been done in this discussion. I do not think I ought to delay the House by answering any of the more general observations of the hon. Member for Northampton. As regards the statements about the distress of the people of India, it is the easiest thing in the world to pick out one or two isolated cases of poverty and distress, but I think it is most unfair to represent that as the general condition of the people of India. No one knows better than the hon. Member for Northampton, so conversant with the affairs of India as he is, that the general condition of the people of India, as the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Provand) has stated, has greatly improved under English rule; and anybody who represents the results of English rule as disastrous to the people of India must be very ignorant of the actual state of matters. Now, I think I have answered everything which has been put forward by the hon. Member for Northampton, and I do not think there are any other statements I should take notice of except those of the hon. Member for Elgin. The hon. Member has given us an interesting account of the disgracefully incompetent manner in which the revenue and survey officers discharge their duties. I cannot answer that now by replying to all the details he brings forward, but I should be very much astonished if the body of English, Irish, and Scotchmen who constitute the Civil Service of Bombay was so incompetent as he represents. He says that the method of taxation is based on a miscalculation, and that the rents are shamefully over-valued by the erroneous and ridiculous manner of arriving at the basis of taxation. I can only say that such accusations as that, if they are to be made at all, should be made in the Council of the Government of Bombay. There are independent members of that Council, and if there is any gentleman in Bombay who would wish to take up this subject the Governor of Bombay would place him upon the Council, where he could point out anything so melancholy, if it existed, as that which has been pointed out by the hon. Member. As to the hon. Member for South Donegal, I do not think he has such a bad opinion of this House as one would naturally gather from some of the things he says, and I do not think that the Member for Elgin has such a bad opinion of the House either, but I believe that these stock speeches have been made rather too often in the interests of an Association which is trying to carp at and criticise anything the Government of India does. I hope that such extremely violent charges as these gentlemen have made will not be received with credulity, but will be valued according to their real worth.

*(1.45.) MR. SEYMOUR KEAY: I have avoided rising to interrupt the right Gentleman, but with regard to his last remark, I do not think anybody in this House who knows my past career will say that I speak in the interests of any Association or any body except the people of India, for whom I have suffered, and willingly suffered, a great deal, without seeking or receiving a shadow of remuneration in the slightest degree. The right hon. Gentleman has stated very candidly, and just as I expected he would, that it would be impossible for him on the spur of the moment to go into the details which I have endeavoured to give to the Committee with reference to the revenue and survey officers, but he expresses surprise that I should lay such charges against a body of men who constitute the Civil Service of India. I have not brought charges against them; I have only given a faithful description of the false arithmetical methods under which they perform their duties. It is not their fault; they are bound to perform their duties in the way I have described. But I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman one question, and I think I have a right to press for a reply. Let it be granted that he rejects my data on which I have based my conclusion that the ryot has to pay the whole—aye, and more than the whole—of his net rent to the Government. I now ask: how does he himself arrive at the conclusion which formed the key-note of his speech, and on the correctness of which, I hold, the whole welfare and the very existence of our Empire hangs—that the land revenue of India at present consists of only one-half of the net rent of the soil? The right hon. Gentleman has given no vestige of information as to how he arrives at this result, and he will surely see the imperative need of his placing the Committee in possession of whatever reasons he has for adhering to his view, as against all the counter arguments which I have adduced.

*(1.48.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I rise as a new Member to complain of the late period at which we receive these Accounts. I do not consider that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India has made a very good excuse as to why we have not been asked to consider these matters earlier. He has said that we were so excited earlier in the Session that we were not in a fit humour to consider the welfare of 250,000,000 of Her Majesty's subjects, and in another matter he has blamed the printers, and says that he is not responsible for them. But surely it was possible in a great city like London to have these documents printed much sooner than he says it was. Then the right hon. Gentleman who brings this important subject before us at a late hour of the Session has even avoided detailed answers to the arguments on this side. He did not answer to the criticism on the opium question. It was a trade which is a disgrace to this country, and we should be ashamed that we are making money out of the degradation of the people of another country. And he might also have told us whether in the near future the Government are going to consider whether they should reduce the tax upon salt. Again, no reply was made to the statements about the employment of natives in connection with the Government Offices in India. I understand that though natives come at great expense to this country and pass

examinations, yet they do not get employed in the Government of their country.

*SIR J. GORST: No, no.

*MR. MORTON: I understand there are a few exceptions.

*SIR J. GORST: If the hon. Member would read the Report of the Public Service Commission, he would see that they are largely employed.

*MR. MORTON: I understood there were about 150 employed out of 2,000. That is a very small number. From information which I have from outside, I gather that the natives are not employed in the service of the country, as they ought to be, and not at all unless they come to this country and pass examinations.

*SIR J. GORST: No, no.

*MR. MORTON: I have looked over these Accounts, but it is impossible, with them only a few hours in our hands, to consider the statement carefully. I wish, however, to call attention to the net revenue and the gross revenue. The gross revenue is stated at £85,000,000, and the net revenue at under £50,000,000. Then there is £15,000,000 or £16,000,000 unaccounted for, which appears to be the cost of collection. That may explain why the Government should employ Indian labour. The employment of Europeans is very expensive, and this accounts for where these £15,000,000 or £16,000,000 go. Nor is that the whole of the expense, for besides this there is £12,000,000 for the Civil Departments. Why was the cost of collection so great in India? Why, by employing Europeans. I am satisfied that in the near future you will have to consider the whole Government of India. As soon as we get rid of the Irish difficulty the question of India will have to be taken up. The great Empire of India will never be properly governed until the people of India have a voice in the Government of their country.

*(1.52.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I have gone very closely into this question while in India, and nothing can be more surprising — not to use a stronger expression—to anyone who knows about assessment—particularly the assessment of Western India—than the statement that it is over-assessed, as the hon. Member for Elgin says. He questions the accuracy of the statement that the assessment of India is on the basis of half the net rental. But that is precisely what it is in North-Western India, where land is generally sub-let. I take the case of Bombay, which I know best, but I know that it is so in other parts of India too. The assessment there is much less than half the value of the land; for when sub-let it yields twice, thrice, and even five times the amount. Then the hon. Member who has just spoken (Mr. Morton) talked about natives not being employed in the Government Service. Why, there are many thousands of natives so employed.

*MR. MORTON: As Civil Servants?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Particularly in Revenue Departments. Natives are chiefly employed in the Revenue Survey, and in the other Services they are also extensively employed. It is only in the highest ranks of superintendents that Europeans are employed. For general purposes the appointments of revenue officers, and all those officials that come in contact with the natives, are held by natives.

*(1.55.) MR. SEYMOUR KEAY: I do not think that any hon. Gentlemen on either side of the House need imagine I shall detain them long. But I wish to call attention to the supposed reply given to me by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I thought I had misunderstood him at first when he said he had risen to tell me that the Government demand was half of the rent. I suggested to him net rent, which I fancied was what he meant, and I had hoped that he had accepted the correction. It would, at all events, have represented what the Government meant, although very far from what the actual figures bring out. I have offered to put in the right hon. Gentleman's possession proofs of what I said. But the right hon. Gentleman has shown no desire for proofs. I may, however, mention the name of Sir W. Wedderburn, who was a distinguished officer of the Bombay Government. Hon. Gentlemen representing the purely official element in India may laugh, but Sir William Wedderburn has put his case in print. He has proved his part of the case down to the ground, and no one has ventured to contradict him. I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman

should instance the North West Provinces of India—in other words, the provinces where there are landlords, and where the land is let to tenants, which is a very different thing. He speaks of a country 1,000 miles north of Bombay. And he says that we know what the net rent is, because it is half what the land lets for. This is evidently worse and worse, for land, unfortunately too often, lets at its gross rent; and the right hon. Gentleman thinks he has answered me by telling us what the Government of India themselves would never allege for a moment, and all because he appears ignorant of the fact that the mass of the ryots of India, including those of Bombay, whom the right hon. Gentleman governed for five years, are peasant proprietors under Government, and that therefore, as there is no tenancy, there can be no letting value, as alleged by the right hon. Gentleman. I now fervently hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for India, to whom we have a right to look for a substantiation of the leading statement of his Budget Speech, will give the Committee some explicit statement as to how the Government arrived at the calculation that the land revenue incidence is light, that it takes the half of the net rent merely and leaves the other half to the cultivators. To know how he arrives at this calculation will not only be interesting to the Committee, but infinitely more interesting to the scores of millions of cultivators of the soil who now stagger under the burdens which I have described.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

Friday, August 15, 1890.

POSTAGE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND INDIA.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether arrangements have been completed with the Treasury and British Post Office for the reduction in postage between England and India; and whether he can state what date has been fixed for the said new postage rates to come into operation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): I am sorry to say that the arrangements are not yet complete, and the Secretary of State, therefore, is not yet able to announce the date when the new rates will come into operation.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (APPROPRIATION) BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(6.42.) SIR W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton W.): I wish to refer to the manner in which the affairs of our Indian Empire are administered. As the Rules of the House are at present arranged it is utterly impossible to obtain any satisfactory discussion of any great questions involving matters of interest in India, except those which are concerned with the Indian Accounts. An hon. Member did, at some earlier time in the Session, obtain by ballot a day for the discussion of a matter somewhat akin to that which I am now bringing forward; but his day was taken from him by the Government, and the consequence is that the question has never been brought forward. When the hon. Member to whom I refer (the Member for North Kensington, Sir Roper Lethbridge) complained on the subject, I understand the Government agreed to consider the matter. The position is simply this: By Standing Order 51, whenever an Order is read for the House to resolve itself into Committee, not being Committee of Supply or Ways and Means, you, Sir, are to leave the Chair without Question put. Therefore, on these occasions we are prevented altogether from bringing forward questions of the greatest interest to this country and to many Members of this House. I cannot fancy that anything could be more calculated to produce feeling on the part of our fellow-subjects in India than the methods we employ in dealing with their affairs in this House. We do not allow them to take a large share in the administration of their own country, and we profess to be the guardians of their interests in this House; but we do not exercise any powers in regard to the guardianship of such interests. A notice which was put down in the early part of this year would have had the effect of amending the Standing Order so as to give those desirous of discussing Indian affairs at any length, or on any appropriate occasion, power to do so. I want to State to the Government that, in the coming Session, it will be my business to endeavour to get that notice placed again on the Paper, and also to secure a day for its discussion. The notice was to the effect that Standing Order No. 51 be amended by inserting after the words "Ways and Means," the words "the Committee on the Indian Financial Statement." I believe there are many Members who will support me if I am able to take that step. I believe the Government themselves are desirous that the present state of things should no longer continue, and I do appeal to the House to assist in providing some means of relieving the House from what is a grave and serious scandal. If this be done I am certain the occasions will be few when advantage will be taken of such a modification of the Order, and that discussions will only be raised on matters of deep and serious interest to the Government themselves.

(6.45.) SIR R. N. FOWLER (London): I quite agree with all the hon. Member has said, and I hope the Government will favourably consider his contention. I wish to draw attention to a question in regard to which, in conjunction with my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcudbright (Mr. M. Stewart), I had the honour to introduce a deputation to Lord Cross, namely, the sale of opium in India. Formerly the East India Company and the Indian Government did all that lay in their power to restrain the selling of opium amongst their own subjects, the people of India. I am afraid the Government of India is not so careful as it used to be, and I trust attention will be given to the subject.

*(7.31.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I am sorry to detain the House, and I will not do so at any length. There is a question I should like to put to the Under-Secretary of State for India, a question we could not put last night, because we were restricted to the financial side of Indian questions. Why, I ask, do the Government refuse to allow the people of India to have some elected Representatives upon the Indian Councils? It is an important question we have not had the opportunity of discussing during this Session.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

EAST INDIA (REVENUE ACCOUNTS).

Resolution reported,—

"That it appears, by the Accounts laid before this House, that the Total Revenue of India for the year ending 31st day of March, 1889, was Rx.81,696,678; that the Total Expenditure in India and in England charged to the Revenue was Rx.81,659,660; that there was a Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure of Rx.37,018; and that the Capital Outlay on Railways and Irrigation Works was Rx.1,638,001, besides a Capital Charge of Rx.10,336,049 involved in the Redemption of Liabilities."

Resolution agreed to.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, August 18, 1890.

PROROGATION OF THE PARLIAMENT.

THE PARLIAMENT was this day prorogued by Commission.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR delivered Her Majesty's speech as follows:—

My Lords and Gentlemen,

"My relations with all Foreign Powers continue to be of a pacific and friendly character.

My attention has been called to the inconveniences which might arise from the possible conflict of territorial claims in the newly-occupied regions of Africa. I have, therefore, entered into negotiation with the Powers principally concerned for the purpose of marking out the boundaries within which the action of the respective Governments is to be confined. The arrangement with Germany, which closes the most difficult of these questions, has been completed and laid before you; and in order to give effect to it you have sanctioned by a special Statute the cession of the island of Heligoland.

An Arrangement has also been entered into with France, separating the territory adjacent to the southern frontier of Algeria from the territory which is under the influence of the Royal Niger Company. An Agreement for the delimitation of other territories in Africa is under discussion with the Government of Portugal.

I have agreed with the President of the French Republic that the British Protectorate over Zanzibar and the French Protectorate over Madagascar shall be mutually recognised by the two Powers.

I have offered to the President of the United States to submit to arbitration questions of difference that have arisen between us with respect to jurisdiction in Behring's Sea.

The Conference upon the Slave Trade, assembled at my suggestion by His Majesty the King of the Belgians, has brought its deliberations to a close. The Final Act has received the adhesion of all the Powers represented at the Conference with the exception of His Majesty the King of the Netherlands. The Protocols will be laid before you as soon as they are received. I earnestly hope that the resolutions to which the Conference has come may lead to results worthy of the high and benevolent purpose which has inspired them.

Controversies have arisen between my subjects in Newfoundland and the French fishermen upon that coast with respect to the true interpretation of the rights reserved to France by the Treaty of Utrecht and subsequent engagements. The adjustment of these differences is occupying the anxious attention of my Government.

I have gladly given my assent to the Act which you have passed for conferring upon the Colony of Western Australia institutions similar to those which have worked with remarkable success in the other Australian colonies.

I have learnt with satisfaction, that a Convention has been ratified by the Volksraad of the South African Republic which will, I trust, bring to an end the difficulties which existed in respect to Swaziland.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I thank you for the provision which you have made for the requirements of the State. It is a matter of much satisfaction to me that you have been able to make substantial progress in the task of reducing the public burdens.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I am rejoiced to observe that effective steps have been taken by you for the promotion of primary, intermediate, and technical education.

I trust that the measures which you have passed for the extensive re-construction of barracks will secure the health and increase the efficiency of my soldiers. I am glad that you have been able materially to improve the position of the Police Force, on whose valuable service increasing demands are made.

The policy you have adopted of giving uniformity and increased vigour to precautions against contagious diseases among cattle will have a salutary influence upon a very important interest.

The Amendments you have made in the system of winding-up companies under the Law of Limited Liability will be of advantage to commerce; and the Acts as to allotments, and with respect to Houses for the Working Classes, will contribute largely to the well-being of the labouring portion of my people.

I commend you earnestly to the care and blessing of Almighty God."

Then a Commission for proroguing the Parliament was read.

After which,

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said:

My Lords and Gentlemen,

By virtue of Her Majesty's Commission under the Great Seal, to us and other Lords directed, and now read, we do, in Her Majesty's name, and in obedience to Her Commands, prorogue this Parliament to Saturday, the Twenty-fifth day of October next, to be then here holden; and this Parliament is accordingly prorogued to Saturday the Twenty-fifth day of October next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, August 18, 1890.

PROROGATION OF THE PARLIAMENT.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went;—and the Royal Assent was given to the Bills mentioned on page 1200.

Afterwards Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech was delivered to both Houses of Parliament by the Lord High Chancellor (in pursuance of Her Majesty's Commands).

Then a Commission for proroguing the Parliament was read.

After which,

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said—

My Lords and Gentlemen,

By virtue of Her Majesty's Commission, under the Great Seal, to us and other Lords directed, and now read, we do, in Her Majesty's Name and in obedience to Her Commands, prorogue this Parliament to Saturday the Twenty-fifth day of October next, to be then here holden; and this Parliament is accordingly prorogued to Saturday the Twenty-fifth day of October next.

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